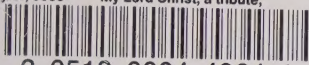


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MY LORD CHRIST

JOSEPH JUDSON TAYLOR

MY LORD CHRIST

A Tribute

BY

JOSEPH JUDSON TAYLOR

M.A., D.D., LL.D.



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
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MY LORD CHRIST
—B—
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO
Margaret Taylor
and
Virginia Taylor
my
Granddaughters

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MY LORD CHRIST.

I

JESUS DESIRED IN ALL LANDS

"And the desire of all nations shall come." HAGGAI 2:7.

That was a gracious message for ancient Israel, and it was preserved for the depressed and doubtful in all ages. The chosen people were in deep distress. Long ago they had rejected the authority and guidance of God, and struggling in their own strength they steadily sank into the slough of disaster and despair. Ten of their tribes, comprising the larger numbers and bearing the sacred name of Israel, had gone into endless eclipse.

"Like the dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the spray from a fountain,
They vanished, and forever."

The remaining tribes, a broken remnant of a rebellious race, had passed from bad to worse until they had become a seed of evil-doers alienated from God and laden with guilt, and yet amid the gross darkness that filled the earth and obscured their vision they were not left without evidence of divine care and promise of better things to come.

Haggai was one of their later prophets, the first to speak after their return from captivity in Babylon. He joined in the familiar chorus that had sounded through the centuries announcing a deliverer destined to be a hiding place from the storm and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Out of intimate communion with God he came with comfort and promised the fulfillment of every desire. He pointed to the Babe of Bethlehem and heard in advance the angel song of peace on earth and good will to men. For the Almighty he gave the promise: "I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land, and I will shake the nations and the desire of all nations shall come."

The reality of the desire for Jesus has abundant proof. Some have objected that the idea is contrary to what another prophet has said: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him." They also recall the New Testament record, that he came unto his own and was not received, Jew and Gentile alike forgetting their mutual antipathies in their zeal to set him at naught and crucify him between two thieves. But this is a partial view of the case. It is quite possible for men to desire relief from an unhappy condition, and yet fail to discern and appropriate

the means offered to obtain it. It is possible for them to long for a friend and helper, and yet fail to identify him when he appears. One of the many tragedies of the Civil War was the killing of Jackson at Chancellorsville in 1863, he being shot down by men who loved him devotedly, but failed to identify him when he appeared before them. Had they known, oh, no! they would not have shot their leader and friend. Had the people of Nazareth known, they would not have led Jesus to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might thrust him down headlong. Had the princes of this world known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. It was their ignorance that evoked from their victim the earnest prayer: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

The prophet says: "When we shall see him, there is no beauty"—when we shall see him in his humiliation a sort of beggar's babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger; when we shall see him growing up in the narrow confines of Nazareth and living by the labor of his hands; when we shall see him consorting with ignorance and poverty and sin and claiming no place to lay his head; when we shall see him subject to those who hated him, clothed in garments of mockery and crowned with twisted thorns; when we shall see him in apparent defeat hanging on a

tree in agony and blood and at last yielding himself over to the dominion of death and the grave; when we shall see him with imperfect vision and fail to discern a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, —“there is no beauty that we should desire him.” Nothing in the Jewish history of the times is more distinctly set forth than their expectation of the Messiah; but knowing themselves to be a chosen people they resented the oppressions which they suffered, and they naturally centered their hopes in a physical deliverance. They expected the Deliverer to come in the pomp of earthly power, red in his apparel as one that treadeth in the wine vat, trampling his enemies beneath his furious feet and staining his raiment in their blood. They desired him with passionate desire, but they saw him different from what they had expected, and they rejected him with disdain. The few who received him also received power to become sons of God; the rest failed of their desire, because they failed to identify him as the Saviour of their souls.

The extent of the desire for a Deliverer is also a question of interest. After the Jewish people as a class had failed to see in Jesus the promised Messiah they were unwilling for him to be preached to the Gentiles, lest dogs should eat of crumbs falling from the Master's table. Paul, aroused strong opposition among his brethren in the flesh by offering the privileges of the gospel to

the heathen. Speaking from the castle stairs in Jerusalem he received respectful attention until he mentioned the divine purpose to bless the Gentiles through the Messiah, and at that unwelcome doctrine they lifted up their voices and cried in unmeasured fury: "Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live!" Their very resentment implied that the Gentiles desired the Christ offered in the gospel, and so confirmed what the prophet had said.

Isaiah speaks specifically: "In Galilee of the Gentiles the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light." Not only have they seen, but they have enjoyed: "There shall be a root of Jesse which shall stand for an ensign of the people, and to it shall the Gentiles seek." "I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles; he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall his voice be heard in the street; a bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench till he send forth judgment unto victory, and in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

The Scriptures give definite instances of Gentile yearning after the Christ. In the land of Uz, lying far out on the borders of Edom, there was a man whose name was Job. He dwelt in the midst of a people steeped in idolatry, worshipping the hosts of heaven and giving loose rein to every evil passion; and yet he was perfect and upright,

eschewing evil and working righteousness in the land. In the degenerate days between Esau and Moses he stood as a pillar of light to guide men in the paths of peace. In tones of confidence not surpassed by the Hebrew prophets themselves he spoke of the Redeemer as living somewhere and destined to stand on the earth in due time, bringing life and immortality to light: "I know," and at that distant day there were few who knew so much, "I know that my Redeemer liveth and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth, and after skin worms destroy this body without my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Holding such faith he was hardly alone in his confidence, but spoke for other elect spirits who yearned for a Redeemer to deliver them from the power of death and dissipate the fears that held them in ceaseless bondage.

Later came Balaam, son of Bosor, who dwelt in Mesopotamia. He was a strange character, and his life remains a riddle to many; but his fame extended into distant lands, and his wisdom challenged the attention of kings. When Israel journeyed through the wilderness and came to the borders of Moab, he received an embassy of princes from king Balak, saying: "Behold, there is a people come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the earth and abide over against me. Come

now therefore and curse me this people, peradventure I shall prevail and smite them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whom thou blessest is blessed, and whom thou cursest is cursed."

It was a rare tribute to Balaam's power. It flattered his vanity and kindled his avarice; under the spell he taught Balak to cast a stumbling block in the way of Israel, but he still recognized the authority of God and yielded a formal obedience to his word. Appearing in the presence of the king he said: "Lo, I am come unto thee; have I any power at all to do anything? The word that God putteth in my mouth that shall I speak." Whatever his desire to hold the king's favor and win the wages of unrighteousness he was under a divine constraint. Looking out over the camp of Israel:

"He saw their tents, like gathering clouds,
Mixed with the horizon's distant blue;
Saw on the plains their marshaled crowds;
Heard the high strains their trumpets blew.

"A sudden spirit on him came;
A sudden fire was in his eye;
His tongue was touched with sacred flame;
The curser swelled with prophecy:

"How shall I curse whom God hath blessed,—
With whom he dwells, shall ever dwell?"
He clasped his pale hands on his breast:
'Then be thou blessed, O Israel.'

"Broad on the east a newborn star
O'er cloud, hill, desert, poured its rays.

The prophet knew the sign afar,
And fixed on it his wondering gaze.

“‘I shall behold him, but not now;
I, I shall see him, but not nigh;
He comes to lay the oppressor low,
To triumph, suffer, weep and die.

“‘He comes a stranger to his own;
With the wild bird and fox he lies,
And he who calls the heaven his throne
A wanderer lives, an outcast dies.’”

A star out of Jacob. A scepter out of Israel. A prince with authority to rule in all lands. It was a wonderful vision, and it was set forth in appealing terms. Such utterances were known throughout Mesopotamia and the region round about, and they indicated the heart's yearning for a divine visitation and divine aid.

The sacred books of other lands expressed a similar desire among the people. They did not sound the clear note given out by the Hebrew prophets, but they voiced the human yearning for a guide and helper born of heavenly lineage and bearing the authority of God. The year Pompey invaded Jerusalem one of the oracles of paganism said nature was about to bring forth a new king, and the saying filled many minds with ardent expectation. Intent on discrediting the Scriptures, Voltaire ransacked the literature of India and China and other ancient lands to find prophecies of a Saviour similar to those recorded in the

Bible; he found them and his findings merely confirmed the truth proclaimed by Haggai, that all nations desired supernal aid in their struggles against adverse forces which inevitably bore them on toward the abyss. The idea is charmingly set forth in the opening chapters of *Ben Hur*, the gifted author of the book bringing together strangers from distant lands, who talk to each other as familiar friends discussing their common hopes.

The Gentile writings also conformed to the Scripture teaching concerning the character and dominion of the coming ruler. Under his benign sway all forms of hatred and violence were destined to pass away. The lion and the lamb were to lie down together. The old serpent was to be destroyed or transformed. The race of mankind was to come into its primeval inheritance of happiness and peace and little children were to be safe in any place. Even the vegetable world was to be purged of poisons, and everywhere the fields were to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

It is needless to argue whether these Gentile hopes were uttered by special revelation or were born out of the common needs of the race. In either case they meet the demands of illuminated reason and instructed moral judgment. Humanity is of one stock, and its needs are the same in every land. Truth also is one, and it is the same

however expressed. Underlying every parable, every poem, every prophecy, every providence, there is one supreme purpose which has never suffered any lapse or any suspension, but has unfolded in richer glory with every advancing age.

The earlier chapters of the Bible record the victory of the tempter, the later announce his overthrow. The earlier records tell of Eden lost, the later speak of heaven gained. In Genesis the first Adam appears among the trees of the Garden with his bride, the man's wife, in Revelation the second Adam reigns in glory with his bride, the Lamb's wife. The first scenes disclose the horror of sin and death, the later present the rapture of righteousness and life. The ruin and the wretchedness are matters of experience, and they inevitably inspire a desire for relief. The desire is attested in every form of divine faith and worship, every temple, every altar, every sacrifice, every song of praise, every prayer uttered or unexpressed. The desire of all nations centers in one theme, and it is deliverance from sin and guilt and restoration to favor and to peace with God.

The desire of the nations is fully met in Jesus of Nazareth. "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped

in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." This is he of whom it is written: "Thou Lord hast prepared before the face of all people a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel."

The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, and the truth has been demonstrated times without number. Through the centuries there has been found no exception to the saying: "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." In all the universe there is but one name that satisfies the heart's craving. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Amid all the voices that claim the attention of men there is but one that inspires steadfast hope, and it is the voice which proclaims Jesus a Saviour, Christ the Lord. The same yesterday, to-day, forever, he is able and willing to fill the desires of every empty heart.

"Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come.
Into thy freedom, gladness and light,
Jesus, I come to thee." Amen.

II

JESUS IN THE MANGER

"And she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." LUKE 2:7.

This simple incident connected with the birth of our Lord has been frequently cited in evidence of the world's hostility to Jesus, and its unwillingness to welcome him when he came. With this idea in mind Reginald Heber has taught us to sing:

"Cold on his cradle the dewdrops are shining;
Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall,"

as if he were an outcast from his birth. Such a conception, however, is born of prejudice and error, and is not in harmony with the facts in the case. Surely he was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, he was acquainted with grief in all its forms, but the evidence of human hostility and disdain must be found elsewhere. The record naturally interpreted is clear enough in itself: he was laid in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn. The multitudes who had come up from all the country had filled

up the places usually set apart for the use of strangers, and the excess of visitors were obliged to find shelter as they could. In that day it was considered a breach of courtesy for a passing traveler not to be made a guest in some home, and the entertainment of strangers was urged as a possibility of entertaining angels unawares, as Abraham had done in the days long gone. The guest chamber was an essential part of every well-ordered home, and the guest who was received at table was thereby pledged the protection of the house. The story really illustrates the kindly hospitality which so abounds in the homes of the poor. In that lowly place Jesus was born; like other children born in such homes, he was cradled in the manger and given such attention and care as other children in similar conditions received.

This text contains no touch of hostility to Jesus, but it indicates the more important matter of leaving him out because of preoccupation. It shows that he was in the manger with the kindly poor, simply because other places were filled, and there was no room for him; and it presents the facts as they are observed to-day. Sometimes there rises up a man like Saul of Tarsus, whose entire religious nature is shocked by the teachings of Jesus; or a man like François Voltaire, who has been made a victim of false faith and filled with

bitterness; or a man like Robert Ingersoll, who blazes with indignation over the iniquities that have been enacted in the name of Jesus, and such men verily think they ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, and they go forth breathing out threatenings and slaughter against everything that bears the Christian name. They are the exceptions, however, and they do not represent the masses of those who believe not. The Jews as a class to-day are not hostile to Jesus as a man; in their literary clubs they sometimes study the life of Jesus, and frequently they show a pardonable pride in his standing in the Gentile world. Rabbi Cohen of Mobile, who used to hear me preach Sunday evenings, admitted that Jesus was a rare and radiant character and a distinguished honor to the Jewish race; he said his life was an illustrious example of what man may become in this world, and his death a deplorable event, and while he denied that he was the Messiah he admired him as a man. To-day not many anywhere are fighting Jesus, and even the Japanese are willing for the Sunday schools to go on and for the missionaries to come, if they make business and bring prosperous times. The multitudes who are without have nothing against the Lord; they are simply preoccupied with other things, and have no room for him in their hearts and in their lives. It is the old story that has come

down from Bethlehem; Jesus is out in the manger with the beasts of the stall because human hearts are filled with other things.

First, consider some of the things that fill the lives of men and keep Jesus from his rightful place. It is not possible to keep these things clearly separated, because they are often blended in their influence over men, but there may be a general distinction.

There are many lives that are especially occupied and filled with other people. Like the guest-chambers in Bethlehem of old, they are possessed; the occupants hold the space in their own right, and there is no room for Jesus. There is one who years ago solemnly gave himself to the girl of his heart in the bonds of an undying love, as she also gave herself to him. In the providence of God children have been born unto them, sealing the bond with a double sanctity. These precious ones become more and more the objects of deep and holy devotion, and they fill the father's mind and heart seven days in the week. In the Bible he reads of father love, and he knows that it is a thing pleasing to God; so he gives his love and his life to his children and their mother, while Jesus is pushed off to the manger and the fellowships of the stall. Or a man enlarges the circle to include his associates in business, the men who plan and work with him day by day, joining their

wisdom and their energies with his in their efforts to win the battles of life. Another has the wider opportunity that opens in social life. He forms friendships, which are the best things in earthly experience; showing himself friendly he finds friends that stick closer than a brother and fill the heart's desire in that respect. Such experiences of love in the family, of companionship and sympathy in the victories or defeats that attend upon life's way, of friendship that embraces many of the wise and great in this world, are so gracious and so pleasing to God that in many cases they fill the soul and leave no room for the richer experience of fellowship with the Father and the Son Christ Jesus. In such a case there is nothing in the outward world to impress the need of Jesus, and in joyous mood a man goes his way without admitting Jesus as a guest. What he has is good, but it is not the best. It does not include the only name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved; it leaves the man lost and destined to be driven away in his wickedness at last.

There are others who have filled their hearts and lives with material things. Back in the days of Asaph the son of Berechiah men became surfeited with the bounty of this world, and they had no room for God in their thoughts. The psalmist said their eyes stood out with fatness; they had

more than heart could wish, they spoke loftily and setting their mouths against the heavens they walked proudly through the earth. Drinking their waters from a full cup they scornfully asked, "How doth God know, and is there knowledge with the most High?" Succeeding ages have witnessed the repetition of such things. Jesus saw them and deplored them. By parable and precept, by exhortation and entreaty, he tried to turn men from the effort to feed their souls on husks fit only for swine. He told of the man whose fields brought forth abundantly, the blessing of God being larger than his capacity to receive, who pulled down his barns and built greater in prospect of feasting his soul for many years, while the angel of death was hovering over him ready to send him down to the abyss. He recited the case of one rich and prosperous, clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day, who died and later lifted up his voice in hell to call for water to cool a burning tongue. He said it was hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God, and he showed it in the case of the young ruler who came to learn the way of eternal life. He beheld the clean young man, and loved him; yearning over him he bade him sell, and give, and come, and follow, but he saw him, so lovely in life, so promising in character, turn away and refuse the blessing, because his heart was set on other

things. It was the story of Gadara repeated in substance. Only once did Jesus visit that obscure place. He went surcharged with power divine. With a word he cast out an unclean spirit and caused the man who was possessed to be clothed and in his right mind, but the hogs were drowned and the pork was lost. The people knew what he could do; they gathered about him with earnest entreaty and besought him to depart out of their coasts. It was hogs rather than heaven, meat rather than mercy; and the same sort of thing has been repeated from year to year. Men rich and increased in goods often feel the need of nothing; naturally they ignore the claims of Jesus, neither hearing his voice nor opening their hearts to let him in. Nowhere have they any room for him in their schemes of life.

There is yet another class of persons who have no place for Jesus, because their lives are filled with the ambitions and pleasures of the world. By the grace of Cæsar Augustus the elder Herod sat in the seat of authority in Judea, and was filled with the pomp and circumstance of his position. When he heard the wise men from the East asking: "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star, and are come to worship him," he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. He gloried in his power and in the prestige which it imparted, and he shrank from

the prospect of being cast down from his high place. In his pride and lust of power he had no room for Jesus, and he was willing to thrust him out of his heart and out of the land that gave him birth. The same spirit filled the Jewish mind, and left no room for Jesus. It came to pass that he would no more walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him. They were blinded by the sin that reigned in their own souls and filled with their own schemes, and their condition kept Jesus out of their hearts and lives. The same mistake has been committed from age to age. There is real pathos in the words: "The cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word"—choke the word of entreaty, the word of invitation, the word of warning, the word uttered in tenderness and love—"and it becometh unfruitful." Whatever the sin that fills the heart, it leaves no room for Jesus. It is not a matter of distinct hostility, but a matter of preoccupation; and Jesus is left in the manger with the beasts of the stall.

Second, consider the importance of making room for Jesus. It is not merely building a house in his name. The New Testament says nothing whatever about building material houses for God's use, and yet millions of money are expended in that way. Art conspires with science in the erection of vast architectural piles that stand as

monuments of human sacrifice and toil, lily work crowning stately columns and subdued lines of light and shade adding their grace to adorn the splendid structures; but floating down from the distant past comes the sacred assurance: "The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth my foot-stool. What house will ye build me, or what is the place of my rest? For all these things hath mine hand made, and all are mine, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." Sometimes it is an ornate edifice of doctrine and ritual, that is erected as the abode of Jesus the Lord Christ. Every item in the creed is well defined; it is set in choice phrase, and the entire ceremonial is stately and picturesque, but in its completeness it is a dead and desolate thing, and it evokes from heaven only the plea: "My son, give me thy heart." Paul urges the idea of a spiritual house for the King: "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." He seeks a spiritual house from which spiritual sacrifices shall be offered; and with boundless patience he stands at the door and knocks, promising to come in and abide in fellowship with all who hear and open the door.

He is the best guest that any soul can receive. His presence becomes a sure defense against the wiles of the devil and his allies and angels.

“Men can not do without him;
There is no other name
By which they ever can be saved:
No other hope or claim.”

The noblest human friendship is not sufficient. Parents devoted to the welfare of their children can not deliver them from the snares of the wicked one and hold them always in the paths of righteousness. Their hearts are alike in wishing the best things for their own, but after all they can not assure the future for them. There comes a time when parental love and solicitude are helpless. The young people must go out into the world to make their own way, solving their own problems and waging their own battles. In these inevitable conditions there is deep satisfaction in feeling that our children have made Christ their refuge and strength, a present help in time of trouble. Recall the story of Joseph in Egypt, tempted in the house of his master, falsely accused and cast into prison, but attended by the invisible God and guided from the dungeon to the palace. Was it true? Or the story of the Hebrew captives in distant Babylon. There among ungodly strangers they were commanded to fall down and

worship contrary to the law which they had received. They dared disobey, and they were condemned and cast into the fiery furnace; but there walked beside them one like unto the Son of God, and they came forth to honor and fame. The frail boat on the lake was caught in the storm that swept down from the hills, lashing the sea into fury and lifting the waves on high; but Jesus was there to speak peace to the winds and waves and to bring in a great calm. John was banished for the word of God and for the testimony which he held, but Jesus came in majesty and might, and called him into a sweeter fellowship than he had ever known before. In every storm of life he is able to rule winds and seas and guide the traveler to the port of peace. You and I can have no better defense for ourselves, and can wish no better for our children, than Jesus in our hearts and also in theirs.

This guest who brings safety also brings uncommon glory. Both the inn and the barn had their appropriate guests, but there was a wonderful contrast between the two. The inn sheltered men who had come from distant places, some of them no doubt men of piety and learning; the barn sheltered the Son of God, who had come from the glory land full of grace and truth. The inn shone with many tapers lighted by human hands, and casting a fitful light; the barn caught the glow of

a newborn star, whose rays were destined to shine through ages and nations. The inn hummed with the sound of human voices that died away and were forgot; the barn echoed the voice of angels bearing a message that has girdled the globe, changing the thoughts of men and hastening the day when the demon of hatred and strife shall be expelled from the whole world and peace and good will shall abound everywhere. Jesus is able to fill a barn or any place with unspeakable glory. In this assurance John Newton has taught us to sing:

“His name yields the richest perfume,
And sweeter than music his voice;
His presence disperses my gloom,
And makes all within me rejoice.

“Content with beholding his face,
My all to his presence resigned,
No changes of season or place
Can make any change in my mind.

“While blest with a sense of his love,
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove,
If Jesus would dwell with me there.”

Had the princes of this world known, they would not have left him in the stall. Had the sinners of this place known, they would have taken him to their hearts and their homes long ago.

He is the guest whose presence lifts the shadows and calms the soul in the day of bereavement and sorrow. Man is prone to trouble, as the sparks fly upward, and none can finally escape.

“Into each life some rain must fall;
Some days must be dark and dreary.”

From the jail in Philippi down to the last scene of injustice and persecution; from the home of Martha and her sister in Bethany down to the latest house of mourning where helplessness weeps in the presence of sickness and death, the name of Jesus has brought hope and comfort. In this assurance we devoutly sing:

“Jesus knows all about our struggles;
He will guide till the day is done.
There’s not a friend like the lowly Jesus:
No, not one; no, not one.

“There’s not an hour that he is not near us:
No, not one; no, not one.
No night so dark but his love can cheer us;
No, not one; no, not one.”

Make room for him in your own heart to-day.
Receive him in the bonds of an everlasting covenant that shall not be broken. Amen.

III

JESUS IN THE SYNAGOGUE

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and as his custom was he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.” LUKE 4: 16.

Every phase of our Lord's life on earth has its own charm and offers its own lesson. Brief as was his career, he lived the ideal life, beginning as others begin, growing in wisdom and stature as others grow, meeting temptation as others meet it, suffering in the flesh as others suffer and marking with his own footsteps a path for others to follow. In it all he was guided by the changeless principles of righteousness, which must govern every man who makes the most of life, flourishing as a tree planted by rivers of water and bringing forth fruit in every suitable season. The record here set on the sacred page is touched with gracious sentiments. It marks a strange and tender homecoming. He came to Nazareth, where he was brought up, and where still lived his mother and her other children. His childhood was linked with the place, and his early manhood was spent in the city and in the regions round about. After he entered upon his public career it was natural for

him to turn again home, where his face and form were known, where his voice was familiar, where his presence naturally moved many hearts. It was his first visit to the scenes of his youth and the associations of his early years. It was a memorable occasion, and his conduct is fraught with undying interest: "As his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."

The time was the sabbath day. Some divisions of time, the day, the month, the year, are determined by the movements of the heavenly bodies, and they vary somewhat; the week is a definite period of time fixed and invariably appointed by the Creator's imperial word: "In six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh." O the deep and infinite calm of that first sabbath day, when the creative energies of the Almighty ceased from their strange employ, and found repose in beholding the universe so lately brought into being! And God blessed the sabbath day and sanctified it, because in it he had rested from all his work. God's blessing on a person implies the gift of some additional good; his blessing on a thing means that he makes it a source of good to such as use it aright. His blessing on a day makes it a season of rest for the soul and of refreshment for the spiritual nature of man. Jesus fulfilled

the law, but he did not abrogate it; and instead of the seventh day set apart and sanctified by divine command, the Christian sanctifies the Lord's day as he sanctifies the Lord Christ in his heart. With him every day is sacred; and being in the flesh with its limitations he is obliged to observe times and seasons of devotion. Jesus realized the truth, and he did not forget the first sabbath day spent in his old home place; it meant so much to him.

He went into the synagogue. The synagogue, as you know, was the Jewish house of worship, the church of the chosen people. From the beginning of human history there were altars to which devout souls brought their offerings and by which they made their prayers: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Elijah; but in the early years of the race there were no fixed places for the general public to come together to worship God and to gain strength from the divine presence. To Israel in the wilderness the word of God came the first time, saying: "Let them build me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." By special instruction the tabernacle with all its appointed furnishings was set up in the camp, and it was the first fixed place of public worship known to the race. There at the mercy-seat God revealed himself to his people, and gave instructions for their guidance in the way which they took. Later

the tabernacle gave place to the temple in Jerusalem, which in turn became the center of Jewish life and the support of Jewish hopes. When the people were carried away captive into distant lands and were held under constraint, they were kept from the privileges of the temple and were obliged to plan other places of devotion. In the emergency the synagogue came into being; it supplied just what was needed, and it soon found a place in the hearts and lives of the people. It offered a convenient place of worship and instruction; and after the temple was restored the simple services of the synagogue appealed to the popular mind, and synagogues sprang up in every Jewish community, Jerusalem itself not excepted. Jesus knew the secret place of the Most High, and was able to worship the Father in spirit and in truth anywhere. He often retired to lonely mountains to pray in secret, or he arose early in the morning for a season of communion with God; sometimes he offered prayer in the presence of the multitude, or he taught his disciples how to pray, and he said true worship was confined neither to Gerizim nor to Jerusalem, and yet he knew the importance of set times and fixed places, and he gave his sanction to both. There in Nazareth among his kindred and friends he turned his steps toward the sanctuary and went into the place of public worship.

It was a divine example for all time. Jesus knew the laws of spiritual life, and in harmony with the demands of a perfect manhood he sought out the place of public prayer. It was good for him, as he knew it to be good for every soul that would come into its richest heritage on earth. In harmony with the Jewish synagogue and the Greek assembly he said: "I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The emphasis is not on the physical building, but on the assemblage of the people, the enthusiasm of numbers, the glow of fellowship, the spirit of friendliness. God is everywhere present beholding the evil and the good, watching the wounded sparrows that flutter away into the thicket to die, listening to the roar of the young lions that seek their meat from him, hearing the groan of anguish or the hymn of praise rising from human hearts, but he especially meets with his people who assemble in his name. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," even as he set the little child in the midst. The apostle speaks of praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, and his broad scheme includes public prayer and supplication along with other forms of devotion. Again he speaks of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs offering praises to God and making melody in the hearts of men gathered together to express their

devotions. In the worshiping assembly there is a touch of the home feeling, of the family feeling, of the neighborly feeling, and it brings a sense of unity in the interests of life here and in the promise of life hereafter. It brings and binds together the human and the divine, the material and the spiritual, the finite and the infinite, the temporal and the eternal, and it enlarges the scope and meaning of life. Whether Jewish or Christian, the Church touches the deepest experiences of the soul, and gives sanctity to them every one. It hears the vow of mutual love, and adds its blessing to the marriage bond. It enters into the sorrows of life, and utters its message of assurance and hope. It marks the life of the newborn soul, and supplies fellowship and nourishment. It links life with life and soul with soul in the struggles of time, and it gives assurance of victory in the final conflict which marks the opening of eternity. By the grave it sounds the trumpet of resurrection and points to the future gathering of the loved and lost, as they shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Israel in the kingdom of God. Jesus understood, and he set the example for all who claim him as their Lord: he entered into the synagogue on the sabbath day.

The rule which guided him that day was one, of the fixed principles of his life. Luke expressed it in these suggestive terms: "As his custom was."

It was not a new thing with him, a mere incident of his home-coming, a little diversion to please a pious mother ; it was a fixed principle of his life to worship God in the public assembly. He did not form the habit after he left home and took up the work of life ; he began it under the parental roof, where his youthful feet were guided in the paths of righteousness. Fancy delights to gather up those early scenes, when the young child was subject to Joseph and Mary and was growing in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. There was an impressive dignity in the reading of the law and the prophets, as Joseph the priest over his own house opened the ancient scrolls. There was a rich melody in the language of the sacred records, which was associated with all the glories of Israel's past and all her hopes for years to come. There was also the lasting personal touch, as the children of the household were taught in the letter of the law, and also in the sanctities of the sabbath and in the privileges of the synagogue. In that quiet Jewish home where Jesus grew up he was fixed in the habit of public worship, which filled his later life with blessings which no money could buy. Through all the years of his pilgrimage the dawn of the sabbath brought memories of home and mother, and impressed anew the tenderness of love and the worth of friendship and the sweetness of peace

with God. The custom which carried him into the house of God that day was a heritage richer far than any expressed in earthly titles or earthly rank or earthly wealth and fame. It brought him something vital and lasting, and it remained to sanctify the later years.

The experience that came to Jesus has been repeated times without number. Dr. William Adams Brown, of New York, a busy man daily grappling the problems that press for solution, confesses that God does not mean to him what he meant to his father before him. He says he does not have in prayer the intimacy with God which his father seemed to have, but he traces the best things in his religious life back to the home in which he was brought up. Here are his words: "I was born in a home in which belief in God was an everyday assumption in all that was said and done. His presence was recognized in the grace at meals, in the family worship which began the day, in the church services which we all attended on Sundays, in the conversation of father and mother when things went wrong or new conditions arose. More than all it was set forth in the lives of father and mother themselves. No one could be with them any length of time without discovering that the existence of God was as real to them as any other fact of life." He could not have the same intimacies with the divine Being

which his godly parents seemed to have, but the habits of thought and life with which they equipped him remained to shield him against the storms which beat upon him in after years.

Many of us who are here to-day trace the best things in our lives back to the Nazareths in which we were brought up, and to the homes in which were formed and fixed faith in God and habits of worship that have hallowed all our days. Oh, it is possible for men who have come to maturity to break up the customs of their lives and turn into new paths, as the fallow ground is broken with the keen plowshare; it is possible for men advancing in years to adopt the principles which regulated the life of Jesus and live after his example, but the change comes with difficulty and the new way of living often lacks the depth and vitality needed to give it permanence. The men who are really pillars in the temple of God, and are able to bear the stress and strain which wrench the structure, are for the most part men who have had the deep things of God built into the very texture of their lives and made a part of their being. It is merely training a child in the way he should go with the assurance that with the maturity of years he will not depart from it.

True worship, which is first and foremost the experience of fellowship with God and devotion to him, has also a human side both in its origin

and in its exercise. There is a sense in which human love interprets the love divine; and there are times when smiles on human faces and gladness in human voices and warmth in human hand-clasps are as pleasing to God as any ritual ever enacted by unloving souls. In far-off Babylon captive Israel sat in tears beneath the willows, and her heart was wrung at the remembrance of Zion and the intimacies which arose in the sanctuary. Thither the friendly tribes went up; and the human and the divine, the sacred and the secular, were blended as intimately as the voices that uttered psalms of praise. When they devoutly prayed: "Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces," it was for their brethren's sake rather than for anything they could confer on the Almighty. In her excellent book entitled *The Peabody Pew*, Kate Douglas Wiggin impresses the humanly religious and the religiously human phase of public worship, the two blending into the fabric of human life and adding a resistless charm. Coleridge's weird story of *The Ancient Mariner* touches a similar sentiment, as it makes the kirk one of the last objects the voyager sees as he sails away from port and the first that greets his eye as he comes in out of the storm. People no longer go to church from fear and not many go as a matter of duty, but there is a secret

of friendship with man and God which is sufficient to fill every pew when it is rightly understood.

The lesson is plain for us, whether parents or children. The Jewish lad who formed the habit of public worship in a remote village in Galilee nearly two thousand years ago is known and loved in many lands to-day. The principles of faith and love to God and man which were instilled into his mind are as true to-day as they were then, and they are quite as necessary for any successful life. If we believe in the church as a divine institution, which has been established for the welfare of the race, and if we want it to continue for the good of coming generations, we must give it a proper place in our own lives. If we desire the best things for our children, and if we expect them in due time to give their affection and zeal and enthusiasm and energy to the church we love, we must try to fix in them the habit of church life, and must enrich it with the light of love and the flavor of real friendship. We must let the church have our love, and must link it with our laughter and tears and all the best things in our lives. Being faithful here we shall at last come to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Amen.

IV

JESUS DISPLAYING GODHOOD

"But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" MATTHEW 8. 27.

The incident here recorded is mentioned by three of the evangelists, whose accounts differ only in minor details in no way affecting the truth and beauty of the story. It was the crowning work of a busy day. Jesus had answered questions, had uttered and expounded parables and had declared the doctrines of the kingdom, and as the evening shadows lengthened in the vales he felt the need of repose and gave orders to depart to the other side of the lake. After getting under way he retired to the hinder part of the ship, and

"As the vessel o'er the waters crept,
While the swelling sails they spread,
The wearied Saviour gently slept,
With a pillow 'neath his head.
But soon the lowering sky grew dark
On Bashan's rocky brow;
The wind swept down upon the bark;
The waves dashed o'er her prow."

In kind it was a common occurrence. The intense heat generated in the basin about the lake

rarefied the atmosphere, and then under favorable conditions the colder air from the adjacent mountains rushed down into the ravines with a violence that lashed the waters into fury and sometimes seemed to shake the solid land. In that particular case the storm was quite severe, being fitly described in a word that means an earthquake. The disciples were accustomed to the sea; they were familiar with the freaks of the weather, but they lost their fortitude and their faith and with clamorous voice they rushed back to arouse their Master and seek his help. Yielding to their entreaties he calmly arose, and addressing the raging elements in the language of personal appeal, saying, "Peace, be still," he brought them a great calm. The psalmist had said: "O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee or to thy faithfulness round about thee? Thou rulest the raging of the sea; when the waves thereof arise thou stillest them." In the light of the psalmist's words the deed assumed a strange significance. It identified the man so lately asleep on a pillow as the object of the psalmist's praise, the God whose word is mightier than stormy winds or rolling waves. It was a revelation of godhood in Christ, and it impelled the earnest question: "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

It was a disclosure of God in concrete form,

and it was made for them and for all succeeding generations. There is a common experience of vagueness in the idea of God. Men feel the impulse of worship stirring in their souls; they undertake to give direction to their effluent devotions and they are often confounded, because they have no definite notion of the God whom they desire to adore. He seems a changeful glory without form or center or local habitation, a vast shadowy presence lying beyond the apprehension of the senses and eluding the keenest quest, uttering no audible voice and revealing no outline of his person, and men strive in vain to lay the measuring rod upon his boundless existence. In the earliest historic time Job said: "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!" In the shadow of the cross Philip earnestly pleaded: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Through the centuries men have ransacked the heights and the depths engaging every mental process and tracing every beam of light into the trackless void in search of the Father of their spirits, and yet no man hath seen God at any time. The whole brotherhood of prophets and psalmists and apostles agree that God the Father is not disclosed to the outward man; rather they declare him a Spirit immortal, invisible, whom no man hath seen or can see and whom no man can compass with material boundaries. Some

of the emptiest things in theological lore, which surely has its share of dullness, are found in the labored confessions which undertake to define God in terms of human speech. The infinite and eternal can not be hedged about with finite limits. The second command of the decalogue rests on this fact, and it forbids every effort to make any symbol of the Almighty. Such symbols may be idealized and carried to the utmost limits of the human mind, but in their best forms they fall short of the reality and serve only to belittle the God who is the Maker and Ruler of all things. A block of wood or stone graven by art and man's device, fashioned into the shape of man or monster, cross or crucifix, can never bear any helpful relation to the God of the whole earth. They are merely parts of his creation, and they become centers of superstition as men become idolaters. A clam shell or a cracker may be shrouded in mystery and may evoke the reverence of the ignorant, but it can never be a true symbol of him whom the heaven and the heaven of heavens can not contain.

In the perfection of his being God is forever the same without variableness or shadow of turning; he reveals himself to his people without respect of persons, looking from his high and holy place to the humble and contrite spirit everywhere, and yet he is conceived differently by different men. The sunlight falls alike over the whole earth, and

yet it appears red or orange, yellow or green, according to the medium through which it passes. In the same way different conceptions of God are made in the minds of men according to their capacity to receive the truth. In the early days of the race and down to the present time there are severe aspects of the divine character revealed for those who are coarse and callous and unresponsive to love's appeal. To such God is a mighty man and a man of war, whetting his sword, bending his bow and making ready his arrows. He is a God of armies, who flashes his fury in the lightning and utters his wrath in the thunder. He is a God of vengeance whose anger burns into the lowest hell and consumes the foundation of the mountains, and whose hand is raised to smite his enemies with ruthless ruin. He is a God who meets stubborn iniquity with inflexible righteousness; and when men live in Sodom and sink lower than the brutes, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness and denying the righteousness that imparts life and being, God is revealed in the sterner phases of his character, that the course of wickedness may be stayed and reform wrought in the lives of men.

This miracle disclosing God in the form of a man born of a woman and touched with a feeling of human infirmities discloses him as a God of power. The cleansing of the leper, the healing of

the centurion's servant, the restoration of the withered hand in the synagogue, the cure of Peter's mother-in-law,—all were amazing displays of power. Previously it was never so seen in Israel, and yet in every such case Jesus had the coöperation of sentient subjects. When he cast out unclean spirits with his word he still had intelligence as his ally, and even in raising the dead he hardly spanned a gulf so wide as that which separates between sentient being and the forces that drive winds and waves. Certainly no miracle ever wrought was a tax on divine power, nor did it mark the limits of what God could do; but it is difficult to imagine a higher display of authority than that shown in ruling the winds and the waves. By observations extending through the years men have learned to pour oil on troubled waters; sometimes they have ventured on expedients to produce rain at will, but this man utters a word that is mightier than the Euroclydon, and as he speaks there falls upon the raging elements a great calm. The storm disclosed power to break and to ruin and to terrify; this man shows a power sufficient to rule the storm and quiet the seas. It is power that needs no ponderous machinery to do its work; it resides in a will and speaks in the voice of a man who can create and can destroy. The word that can calm the sea can also consign the impenitent soul to outer darkness, there shall

be weeping and gnashing of teeth; it is enough to awe the stoutest heart, and evoke the cry: "What manner of man is this?"

There is here also the manifestation of God in friendly form, responding to the cry of distress and speaking peace to troubled souls. Through all the stages of divine revelation the milder aspects of God's character have found place. Centuries ago Moses desired such a vision of God as would impart strength to his wavering spirit and fill his soul with confidence. In response to his ardent plea God who yet refused to appear before the natural eye passed by proclaiming: "The Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." David also recalls that he hath not dealt with us after our sins nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; and for every penitent soul returning to the paths of righteousness he brings the assurance that the mercy of the Lord endureth forever. It is not John but Isaiah who says: "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." It is not Paul but Jeremiah who cries in an agony of solicitude: "O that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might

weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." It is not Peter but Hosea who says: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help." The God who slew famous kings, Og king of Bashan and Sihon king of the Amorites, is he who says: "Look unto me, all the ends of the earth, and be ye saved, for I am God and beside me there is none else." Here the God who rules the winds with a word is he who hears the cry of helplessness. He puts forth a power mightier than all the storms that ever swept the earth, and he puts it forth to protect his friends, to calm their fears and give them peace. He is a God of power, but it is power clothed in goodness and dispensing love to all who are willing to accept his gifts.

They were deeply impressed by the revelation which they had received. "They feared exceedingly." Had they witnessed the event from the top of some beetling cliff far above the stroke of waves and the rush of waters, they would have been less deeply impressed; probably there might have been some admiration and surprise, but there would have been no thrill of reverence before the conscious presence of God nor any flow of gratitude for personal aid. In the midst of it all they knew their peril; they were spent and spiritless and despairing, and their cry awoke their Master, now their servant as well as their Lord; and he

was revealed to them as a greater one than they had known. He who ruled in the plentitude of power throughout the wide domain of created things stood before them as their teacher and friend, and the realization filled them with strange emotions. After the vision at Luz Jacob awoke in a tremor of solemn reverence, and he said: "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. How dreadful is this place; it is none other than the house of God, and it is the gate of heaven." It was like the experience of the patriarch who feared God and eschewed evil, and yet was abashed in the divine presence and constrained to say: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eyes see; wherefore, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." Or like that of Isaiah who after a vision of divine glory said: "Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of hosts." Many a man who turns his thoughts toward God and what is due to him draws back with a sense of unworthiness, saying: "What am I that I should come before the Most High and claim a share in his bounty?" Like Peter on the lake shore they are ready to cry: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." Yet such Jesus comes to save. They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Jesus

bids men learn the meaning of the saying: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." He uses his power to quiet the fears of those who have accepted him; equally does he show himself the friend of publicans and sinners. It is need that appeals to his compassion and his power. Had there been no storm he might have remained asleep in the hinder part of the vessel, but the peril of his people and their cry for help won his presence and his protection.

God is love, and love's supreme office is helpfulness. In their best estate as the offspring of culture and health and piety, men need nothing so much as they need God. Under the best conditions their lives are full of besetments and woes and marred by disaster and disappointment. The race marches forward with bleeding feet, and much of its music is written in minor strains. There have been shed in silence dumb tears enough to make a sea, and the winds that swept down from Hermon that day were faint and feeble in comparison with the storms that toss men on the tides of time. Trying to compute what the world has suffered, how it has struggled against adverse conditions, how slow its growth in wisdom and goodness, how ready to turn from the heights of progress and plunge into the abyss of brutality and selfishness, one is constrained to cry with the

souls under the altar: "How long, O Lord, how long?" But to all these struggling and suffering ones there is revealed a God whose arm is Omnipotent, whose heart is full of compassion, whose eyes never slumber nor sleep, and who is available for every emergency. He appears not in clouds and darkness to affright the souls of men, neither does he speak in a voice that shakes the earth and the heavens; but he comes in the form of a brother man, subject to the limitations of the flesh, speaking in tones of compassion and promising aid for every time of need. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats and the rocks for the conies; as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. "God is our refuge and strength, a present help in time of trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the sea." Only because men are weak and temptable and liable to fall is God manifest in power to take away their sins and lead them in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. In his care they may be assured that goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their life and in the end they shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

V

JESUS THE WONDROUS TEACHER

"The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."
JOHN 7:46.

These officers were not admiring friends of Jesus, viewing him with partial eye, judging him with lenient mind, willing to ignore whatever seemed strange in teaching or conduct and to magnify every word and deed into something wise and heroic. They were men of hostile minds, full of foreboding and suspicion, jealous of their own standing and envious of the fame which Jesus had acquired. At a distance they judged him a disturber in Israel, subverting the law and treading traditions under foot, and with hostile intent they went to arrest him and bring him into court. Hovering about the temple or standing half hidden in the shadows, listening and watching, they saw his form and heard his voice and felt the strange power that attended his words. Like the doctors in the temple, like Nathanael under the fig tree, like the Nazarenes listening to his gracious words, like the multitudes who shared his ministrations of love or the unclean spirits that shrank abashed from his presence, they were awed and

conquered and held under a spell which they could not escape. Empty of hand they returned to the court which had sent them. They were prepared for the indignant question, "Why have ye not brought him?" Calmly they answered: "Never man spake like this man."

Practically this tribute of the Jewish officers has become the judgment of the ages. The course of time has been set into stages marked by the lives of men who towered above the masses of their kind as the pyramid of Cheops towers above the dunes of the desert. These giants in intellect have been pathfinders for the human hosts, going before and blazing the way for their advancing columns. They have asked the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air and have learned wisdom concerning the mysteries of life. They have spoken to the earth and have found its answer written in strata and stones, and thence they have constructed science and evolved rules for the service of man. They have communed with their own souls, weighing their yearnings and catching the still small voices that speak within, and they have been assured:

"The world can never give
The bliss for which we sigh;
'Tis not the whole of life to live,
Nor all of death to die."

From Moses to Confucius, from David to Homer, from Solomon to Socrates, philosophers, poets, prophets and sages of every land have pondered the conditions and needs of the race and have spoken often wisely and well, but not one of them has ever spoken like the man of Galilee. Moses stood preëminent among the teachers of former times, but he abased himself before the wisdom of Jesus seen afar, saying: "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." David foresaw this man coming to disclose the way of life and to shed the light of his face over the darkened world. All the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after him told of this man who was destined to be a hiding place from the storm and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. They said his coming would make the lame man leap for joy and the tongue of the dumb sing, and would open fountains in the wilderness and streams in the desert. John the Baptist stood in the first rank of great men, and yet he said: "After me there cometh one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." In the humility of his soul he said

he was merely a friend of the bridegroom rejoicing in him who held the bride and honored to share his fame. He saw in Jesus the supreme teacher of mankind, and was followed by other rare and radiant spirits who held communion with eternal things and gladly bore witness: "Never man spake like this man."

This is the tribute of friends and foes alike. In later times men who have denied his divinity and refused him the homage of their hearts have studied his history and praised his virtues. Jean Jacques Rousseau never knew the softening influences of a mother's love. His earlier years were darkened by the brutality and disbelief that blighted France in the dreadful days of the Revolution, and he was deeply embittered against all forms of faith. He fiercely assailed the Christian system, denouncing it in terms of extreme blasphemy, but in his maddest moods he respected the life and character of Jesus himself: "What sweetness and purity of manner! What an effectiveness in delivery! What sublimity in his maxims! What wisdom in his discourses! What presence of mind, what nobility, what truth in his replies! How great the command over his passions! Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and so die without weakness and without ostentation?" In all his dealings with men he never showed a weakness and never made a

mistake. He was assailed by all forms of enmity and tested by all phases of doubt, and yet he was never taken by surprise nor in any way confused. Always he bore himself with the air of a master and delivered his message without hesitation.

The wonder of his teaching lay especially in the authority with which he spoke. Prophets of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, scribes of Israel taught as they were able to interpret the sayings of others, doctors of the law such as Hillel and Shammai pored over what had been written and tried to frame a scheme of life and duty, and nowhere in temple or synagogue was there a voice that spoke with assurance. Heathen teachers were even more uncertain in their utterances, and serious souls were sinking into despair. One of their sages voiced the common sentiment in the words:

“Happiest beyond compare never to taste of life;
Happiest next, being born, with quickest speed
Thither again to turn from whence we came.”

The gloom which hung over the world justified the words of the prophet, that darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people.

On such a scene this man appeared speaking directly out of his own soul and speaking with unshaken confidence. He did not reason with men about his right to speak or their duty to hear, but

he assumed the air of a master and spoke as one having authority. Once the source of his power was questioned, but he declined to answer; he merely uttered the truth and left it to find its place in the hearts of those who heard. With imperial dignity he sat in a seat higher than that held by Moses, and turned the thoughts of men into new ways: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any man will sue thee at law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also, and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy, but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you." Towering above Moses, he also assumed lordship over the lives of men, and he said to them all: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it." He would not allow father or mother, son or daughter, husband or wife to hold in the affections a higher place than that accorded him, and he said

a man must be willing to forsake all he had to be his disciple. He made no appeal to physical forces and he left every man free to decide his own course, but he blasted every hope of the coward who feared to take a stand: "No man can serve two masters, for either he will love the one and hate the other or he will cleave unto the one and despise the other." Sharply he drew the line between righteousness and unrighteousness, declaring it impossible for a man to serve both God and mammon or to be both for him and against him at the same time. In the end of his career he openly claimed all authority in heaven and in earth, and he also claimed a heritage in every nation under heaven. Viewing the world in all of its sins, dominated by lusts and driven by fears, groping in darkness and sunken in the slough of uncleanness, he yet claimed it as his own and sent his disciples to bring it as an offering and lay it at his feet. The very audacity of the scheme set it above everything known in the teachings of men.

Speaking with authority he also spoke with great simplicity. Teachers of real merit have sometimes failed in their work because they have not known how to reach those whom they have desired to instruct. The modern fad of pedagogy, which is making some fuss in the world and very little except fuss, is born of a desire to bring teacher and pupil together in a fellowship of help-

fulness, but this man was the author and finisher of the concrete method of instruction. He used no text-book and he announced no course of study, but he gathered lessons from the common things of life: the drawing of water, the making of bread, the sowing of grain, the brooding of chickens. His teaching was calm and confident, redolent of nature and the fresh odor of fields. Impressing the lesson of trust he said: "Behold the fowls of the air; they sow not neither do they reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not neither do they spin, and yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." Or passing by some quiet pasture where a timid flock rested under a watchful shepherd's eye he said: "I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and am known of mine." He loved birds and brooks, flowers and forests, night and the stars. Under the spell of his words little children lost their fear and weary souls forgot the leaden weight that pressed them down. He was abreast of the times and abreast of the eternities, and he set his teaching in terms suited to the simplest minds.

He also taught with rare adaptation to varying conditions. To men weary and heavy laden he spoke in terms of measureless tenderness: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, and ye shall

find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light," but to those who were arrogant and rebellious he offered no hope. In the presence of penitence sobbing out its grief his words melted with compassion and trembled with sympathy, but against the shams of hypocrisy and the pretenses of selfishness his indignation roared like the thunders of divine wrath. To humble spirits devoutly seeking the truth he was as one that hath a pleasant voice and playeth well on an instrument, but to the gainsaying and disobedient he was as refiner's fire and fuller's soap. To a master in Israel he uttered the deep things of God and expressed wonder at his dullness, but to the plain woman at the well yearning for a sight of Messiah he said in the simplest terms: "I that speak unto thee am he." He required the proud ruler who was hoarding his wealth to sell and give and come and follow, but to the lowly publican using his money to repair past wrongs and to relieve present distress he said: "This day is salvation come to this house." To men of good will he unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and put them into the secret, but to those without he spoke in parables, that seeing they might see and not perceive and hearing they might hear and not understand. With some specific word he touched every relationship in life and touched it with a skill that has never been surpassed. The

wisdom which astonished the officers in Jerusalem long ago has also filled the ages with wonder, and men of varying creeds and nations have compared his words with the sayings of other teachers and they have humbly confessed: "Never man spake like this man."

Time would fail to tell of the substance of his teaching and to bring forth the treasures of what he said. In a ministry extending through happy decades and discussing nearly two thousand themes only a beginning has been made. Through the centuries of Christian history joyful tongues have been telling, telling, telling, telling by day and telling by night, and yet the half has never been told. In the last words of his loving story of Jesus John says he supposes the world itself could not contain the books that should be written, if all the truth were fully set forth, but there are some things which tower in impressive majesty and appeal to every heart.

This man gives a new conception of man's relations to God and eternity. The nations of mankind have always had some notion of a divine Being in whom they lived and moved and continued to exist. They have conceived him as grim and terrible, awful of aspect and fierce in spirit, and they have trembled before him and have shunned his presence as culprits shun a tyrant who rejoices in their humiliation and pain; but this man

speaks of a God who is named in the tender words of the household and addressed as the Father in heaven who yearns over his erring children and stoops to carry their burdens and heal their wounds. Other teachers have faced the mystery of death with a sense of uncertainty and alarm; if they have dreamed of something beyond they hardly hoped for anything better than a wretched existence in the body of a beast or a bird or a reptile, but standing by the grave of his dead friend this man calmly says: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die." Others have spoken doubtfully of life beyond the grave, but this man doubts nothing as he says: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." The place which he prepares is not simply a city of opal towers and gilded domes, of golden streets and gates of pearl and other outward signs of wealth and splendor; it is a place of green fields and gushing fountains, the fields blooming in beauty and the fountains flowing away in streams of eternal life. It is a place of purple hills and verdant plains, of waving trees and flowing rivers,

where all the prophetic visions are fulfilled and there is no hurt nor destruction in all the land. Best of all it is a place of lasting fellowship with the loved and lost who have gone on before.

“High in yonder realms of light,
Dwell the raptured saints above;
Far beyond our feeble sight,
Happy in Immanuel’s love.
Pilgrims in this vale of tears,
Once they knew, like us below,
Gloomy doubts, distressing fears,
Torturing pains and heavy woe.

“Days of weeping now are o’er;
Passed the scenes of toil and pain;
They shall feel distress no more—
Never, never weep again.
Every tear is wiped away,
Sighs no more shall heave the breast,
Night is lost in endless day,
Sorrow in eternal rest.”

By the majesty of his presence, by the kindness of his heart, by the music of his voice, by the simple truth of what he says, this man proves his right to speak and he only brings a message of hope and love. The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth shall perish, but the Lord is the true God and an everlasting King. Great are his signs and wonders and true and righteous are his words.

“Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon his matchless brow ;
His head with radiant glories crowned,
His lips with grace o’erflow.”

His eyes are as a flame of fire and on his head are many crowns, and he only is worthy to reign over all hearts. To-day as of old he speaks to the hearts of men. To-day as of old there speaks from the excellent glory the still small voice: “This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.” Hear him and obey. Amen.

VI

JESUS TEACHING THE CONQUEST OF FEAR

"As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe."
MARK 5: 36.

These words spring from a scene of rare interest and beauty, involving life and health, disease and death. They are addressed to a man named Jairus, a Jew who had won distinction among his brethren, and had become ruler of the synagogue in Capernaum, but had fallen upon days of distress. His daughter, a child of twelve years, was seized of some deadly disease, and lay breathing her precious life away. His wealth of love and money and position availed nothing to break the power of the fell destroyer; in his emergency he remembered Jesus whose form was so familiar about the streets of the city and whose heart was so easily moved with compassion for such as suffered, and to him he turned for relief. Whatever his faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah, he believed in his power to help in time of need. Leaving the home and its anxious inmates he hurried away to find the wonderful healer who was busy with the throngs that pressed about him.

Not to worship him as a divine Saviour, but to honor him as a great physician, he fell at his feet and told him the story of the ailing child who lay at the point of death. His plea was not made in vain, and Jesus went with him; but there were others who had troubles of their own. A timid woman, who for years had been the prey of cupidity and ignorance, also had a trembling faith; she pressed her way into the crowd to lift a fragile finger and touch the hem of his garment, that she might be healed of the plague. It was needed aid; but it took the time, and precious time at that. In the pause that ensued there came messengers from the ruler's house; their faces told the sorrowful story; their lips uttered the fateful words: "Thy daughter is dead; why trouble the Master further?" Dead! Ah, the sickening agony which that awful word inflicts! And Jesus also heard; he knew the import of the solemn message, and turning to the dazed and despairing man he said, "Be not afraid, only believe." It is a case of fear conquered by faith, and it has its lessons for us.

First, consider some of the sources of fear. They are many and varied, and the scale of human anxieties is so large and long that no man can affirm complete knowledge of it all; but the general classes may be known. 1. There are fears that spring up in the physical realm and effect

the temporal well-being of men. Some seem to be timid by nature, and are oppressed by a ceaseless sense of dread. Children often find their pulses quicken with the coming of the evening shadows; and the deepening darkness becomes a realm of mystery and danger, wherein gaunt and boneless forms with hooked horns and gleaming eyes reach out naked arms to catch them by the hair. In youth there are fears that arise at the thought of going away to school apart from the sheltering roof of the home and of meeting with strangers and realizing the roughness of the world. There are fears that sometimes oppress young manhood in trying to decide upon a career, knowing that many eyes are watching and many lips are pronouncing judgment on what is seen; and the maturer years do not lift the burden of fear. There are fears that spring out of every relationship in life. Parents are afraid for their children: for their bodily safety in a world of accidents, for their health in a world of disease, for their morals in a world of corruption, for their faith in a world of temptation and sin. Men of affairs are afraid for their business, where there is so much competition and treachery and deceit. Doctors and lawyers and preachers and teachers have their hours of anxiety; farmers watch the clouds, and capitalists and laborers often wonder what the next move will be. There

is hardly a home or an office or a factory or a school in which there is not some sort of apprehension gnawing at the vitals of some who come in and go out before the eyes of the world. Not that the sense of fear is always actively stirring the consciousness, but that there is always a latent dread ready to seize and shake the souls of men.

Sometimes it is based on appearances that do not warrant alarm, and yet it is real and terrible. The disciples had a day of conquest there on the lake-shore, when they were permitted to be the agents of divine power in bearing abundance of food to the hungry throngs who were fed at the Master's hands; but the evening experiences filled them with fear. From the miracle of the loaves and fishes they turned again to their boats; it was now dark, and Jesus was not with them, and the sea arose by reason of a mighty wind that blew, tossing the ship and beating the waters into spray. Through the mists and shadows they saw a human form moving above the waters; they thought it a hostile sprite coming to do them harm, and they cried out for fear, though it was Jesus coming to bring them to shore. They saw with the only eyes they had, and there could be no blame if they saw amiss. Many a man is shaken by fear of the things that he sees abroad in the earth. Gilbert Holland sets the truth in these impressive words: "I know the world is full of

evil things, and shudder with the consciousness; that care has iron crowns for many brows; that Calvaries are everywhere, whereon virtue is crucified and nails and spears draw guiltless blood; that sorrow sits and drinks from sweetest hearts till all their life is dry; that gentle spirits on the rack of pain grow faint or fierce, and parry and curse by turns; that hell's temptations clad in heavenly guise and armed with might lie evermore along life's pathway, giving assault to all, fatal to most; that death stalks through the earth choosing his victims, sparing none at last; that in each shadow of a pleasant tree a grief sits sadly sobbing to its leaves; that beside each trembling soul there walks the dim gaunt phantom of uncertainty, bidding it look before, where none can see, and all must go, but I forget it all,—I thrust it from me when I may, else I should faint with fear, or drown myself in pity." And before the poet uttered his sorrowful wailings Jesus himself spoke of men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after the appalling things that loomed in the distance and threatened the peace of the earth, whether their fears were well-founded or not.

2. There are also fears which affect especially the spiritual side of life. There are men who praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works; they are confident of his power and

faithfulness, but they fear lest a promise being made of entering into rest they should come short of it. They remember the words of Solomon, as he says: "They shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, the grasshopper shall be a burden and desire shall fail," while men pass on into the silence and mourners throng the streets. John Newton is not alone in singing:

" 'Tis a point I long to know;
Oft it causes anxious thought:
Do I love the Lord, or no?
Am I his, or am I not?"

"When I turn my thoughts within,
All is dark and vain and wild;
Filled with unbelief and sin,
Can I call myself his child?"

And through the ages many of God's people have come into such seasons of darkness and doubt. Elijah sits under the juniper tree filled with dire forebodings. He feels forsaken of God and helpless, and he requests for himself that he may die in peace at the hands of God rather than suffer violence from the servants of Baal. Job, just and upright, serving God and eschewing evil, is covered with sackcloth and ashes as he mentions the terrors of God that are arrayed against him, and he begs God to let loose his hand and cut him

off. David also comes to the time of fear and trembling; he is overwhelmed with horror as he finds no refuge, and in bitterness of spirit he complains that no man cares for his soul. Disciples dwelling in the presence of their Lord have varied experiences. In the day of their triumph they exclaim, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name," but in the day of danger they lose their confidence in his power and flee away in search of safety. Paul also speaks of fightings without and fears within. Many of earth's best have been constrained to cry out, like souls waiting under the altar: "How long, O Lord, holy and true!"

"How long this weariness and strife!
How long these fearful shadows
Upon my saddened life!"

And floating down from the ruins of old Capernaum comes the voice of One who is able to rule the winds and the waves and to open the gates of death, and in tones of unshaken confidence he says, "Be not afraid." Be not afraid for your bodies, what ye shall wear or what ye shall eat and drink. Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not neither do they spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them. Behold the birds of the air; they sow not neither do they reap nor gather into barns, and yet your

heavenly Father feedeth them. God has not given his people the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind, and the fearful and unbelieving are displeasing to him, and to each and all he says, "Fear not."

The remedy for fear is provided in the same breath, and it is a remedy which meets every emergency that comes to men: "Only believe."

1. It is a remedy which meets the necessities of men in temporal things. In one of his recent books Basil King says: "In this present time there is an exhibition of fear on a scale so colossal that it dazes the heart of man. There is not a government that is not afraid of some other government. There is not a government that is not afraid of its own people. There is not a people that is not afraid of its own government. There is not a country in which one group is not afraid of some other group. All is rivalry, enmity, suspicion, confusion and distrust. All statesmen, all ministers, all ambassadors, all politicians, all bankers, all business men, all journalists, all farmers, all workers in arts, all men and women of all classes (with few exceptions), live and work in fear and mistrust. From the supreme councils of nations down to the crooks and conspirators in dives and joints every one is afraid of being double-crossed." Possibly Mr. King makes his statement of the case too strong, but certainly it contains

much of the truth. Mr. Simonds, who has a mighty grasp on national problems, speaks much in the same strain; and common observation confirms what is said. All things are full of labor, man can not utter it, and everywhere fears block the way of human peace and progress; but divine wisdom offers a remedy for it all, "Only believe." Suppose the men who are constantly guiding the world into a deeper slough could be induced to hear the voice of God, and only believe, how soon they would find the right way! Some of them really bear the name of Christ, and in formal phrase they repeat the words, "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever," but in fact they say God has no place in the affairs of the world, and power and glory are gotten by commerce and politics and money and guns! They excuse their lack of faith by the conditions which they confront; but they do not face such conditions as Jairus faced. His daughter was dead, nevertheless he was called to believe; he obeyed, and he won. Abraham was called to slay his son; he went in the spirit of obedience, accounting that God was able also to raise the boy from the dead, whence also he received him in a figure; and believing in the assurances formerly given he got the victory. God is supreme over all his works; before him the nations are as

the small dust of the balance, and Lebanon is not sufficient to burn nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering, and they that trust in him remain secure. Before the withered fig tree Jesus says: "Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed hence and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith." Elsewhere he saith, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

2. Such faith is also a remedy for the fears which arise in the spiritual realm. Stripped of his property, bereaved of his children, seized of sickness, distrusted of friends, his soul slowly sinking down into the abyss, Job says: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Pained in heart and trembling with fear, his soul among the lions, David seeks shelter under the shadow of the divine wings till calamities and temptations pass, and he finds the deliverance which he needs. Isaiah impels men to say: "God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord God is my strength and my song, and he is become my deliverance." Though their sins be as scarlet, they are made as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they become as wool in white-

ness; though they abound, mounting upward like the billows of the sea, they do not surpass the limits of divine grace.

There is an amazing passage in Paul's amazing letter to Romans which depends on God's attitude toward the race: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" If God, who created us of the dust and breathed into our nostrils the breath of life; if God, in whom we live and move and have our being; if God, who has boundless resources and resistless might, who upholds all things by the word of his power; if God be for us! Not for us as atoms in a vast whole, parts of nations and states and communities and families, but for us as individuals! The idea is confusing. Among the countless human beings that spring into life and pass over the allotted span, jostling, struggling, groaning, dropping down and passing from the sight of men, a single soul seems insignificant. Sometimes those who try to accept the written word find themselves in sympathy with the sentiment expressed by the Countess of Huntingdon:

"When thou, my righteous Judge, shalt come,
To take thy ransomed people home,
Shall I among them stand?
Shall such a worthless worm as I,
Who sometimes am afraid to die,
Be found at thy right hand?

"I love to meet thy people now
 Before thy feet with them to bow,
 Though vilest of them all.
 But can I bear the piercing thought:
 What if my name should be left out,
 When thou for them shalt call?"

And to all human reckoning the fear is well founded; but it has no basis in the divine plan. If God be for us, he is for us at all times and in all places; and he that spared not his own son, but freely delivered him up for us all, will with him also freely give us all things. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them falls to the ground without your father. Fear not, therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows." Only believe, and keep on believing. Believe that there is a settled center of peace, where divine power clothed in divine goodness moves through the ages for the good of those who love God and are the called according to his purpose. Whatever your sins, believe that the blood of Christ cleanses every stain, and that the arm of Christ repels every foe. Whatever your fears, let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God and believe also in Christ, who is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him.

"Come, trembling sinner, in whose breast
 A thousand thoughts revolve;
 Come, with your guilt and fears oppressed,
 And make this last resolve:

“ ‘I’ll go to Jesus, though my sin
Hath like a mountain rose ;
I know his courts, I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

“ ‘Perhaps he will admit my plea ;
Perhaps will hear my prayer ;
But if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

“ ‘I can but perish if I go ;
I am resolved to try :
For if I stay away I know
I must forever die.’ ”

VII

JESUS SHOWING HOW THE KINGDOM COMES

"And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come, he answered and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo, here, or, Lo, there, for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." LUKE 17: 20, 21.

Much of Christ's teaching was corrective. He saw men holding crude and hurtful notions of his character and designs, blinded by passions that had grown furious through a sense of helplessness, sensitive and sore on account of the wrongs they had suffered, resentful of instruction and ready to stone the prophets that were sent unto them. He read their minds and understood their difficulties in every detail. He knew men. He knew their burdens and conflicts, their lapses and limitations, their transports and victories, their humiliations and defeats. Knowing them he yearned over them as over sheep that were shepherdless and scattered and torn. Piercing the dull exterior and discerning their true condition he measured their necessities and ministered to their needs as they responded to his care. Filling their hunger and healing their hurt he taught plainly or in parables as they were able to hear. Sometimes he assailed cherished precepts or sacred

traditions, but always in gracious spirit and for helpful ends. He combated, that he might correct. He wrecked, that he might rebuild. He killed, that he might cure. He untaught things which had been learned amiss, that he might lead docile spirits into a larger knowledge of truth.

Here he begins his instruction by clearing the way. The agony soon to leap from his lips, as he wept over the city, already shook his frame. The baptism which even in anticipation so straitened his soul drew near. He foresaw the desolation destined to follow the fires of resentment which burned in many breasts, and he felt a weight of yearning and solicitude for all the woes which hovered over the nation that gave him birth. But the Pharisees came into his presence with doubtful questionings. They had heard a good deal about a kingdom to come. It was foretold as a kingdom set up by the God of heaven, destined to break in pieces and consume all other kingdoms and stand forever. Psalmists had sung of its glories, prophets had proclaimed its power, saints had lingered on the verge of the tomb willing to lie down in death, if first they could see some sign of its coming or hear the tramp of its advancing hosts. But the prospect was not inspiring. Fishermen or publicans, untaught alike in the arts of war or the lore of the schools, seemed an unpromising start for such a power. Herod had

trembled on his throne and all Jerusalem was troubled when the wise men said, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east and are come to worship him." But the excitement soon subsided. The wise men and their new star passed from the scene. The prince of the promised reign trudged around on foot without a place to lay his head, a motley throng tramping at his heels; he said the kingdom was at hand and called men to turn and enlist for the opening fray, but the months rolled by and lengthened into years without bringing any certain sign of a new régime. Naturally the Pharisees grew impatient and scornful. Coming before him they demanded with evident doubt and deprecation when the much mentioned kingdom should come. They wanted to know when all the preaching and teaching and working of wonders should end and the actual reign begin. When? And Jesus calmly answered, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." It is a kingdom within.

These ardent souls had no right conception of what the kingdom of God was designed to be. They expected a kingdom that would appeal primarily to the physical senses and come with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. They recalled the prophet's vision of a royal rider coming from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah,

speaking in righteousness and disclosing might to save his friends, but equally mighty to trample his foes beneath his feet and stain his raiment with their blood. They cherished the exploits of Gideon and Barak, of Samson and Jephthah, of David and others who had sometimes won by methods of violence. They remembered the valor and victories of John Hyrcanus or Judas Macabæus, whose daring deeds had marked the golden age of their later history and had brought undying renown. Feeling their own helplessness they fancied the coming Deliverer a mightier Gideon or a nobler Hyrcanus, clothed in authority and having armies at his command, every man ready to go or to come or to do, though his obedience should involve the wasting of lands, the sacking of cities, the shedding of blood, the rending of hearts. They thought of bannered legions, glittering armor, stamping steeds; of victorious armies, triumphal processions, applauding throngs; of overthrown kings, circumcised captives, extended territory,—a kingdom sceptered with a rod of iron, breaking the nations as a potter's vessel and stretching from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. A kingdom in which two swords were enough, a kingdom which should have but one soldier and him commanded to sheathe his blade when it had struck but a single blow, a kingdom of righteousness and peace ex-

tending love to enemies and setting the servant of all in the highest place was a thing beyond their noblest dreams. In their finest fancies they were carnal, of the earth earthy; and if sometimes they felt an impulse stooping from the spiritual realm it was like a straggling strain of music heard for a moment and then lost, and they lived on in utter ignorance of those serene experiences which mark the reign of God in the soul and bring the perfection of character in individual life. With the natural eye they saw no palace, no throne, no scepter, no crown, none of the tokens of earthly empire; they had no spiritual sight, and with all their tense and eager watching they failed to discern the kingdom of power.

The successors of these earnest Pharisees have followed on in ceaseless succession to this present hour. The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the will of God, neither indeed can be. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. He can not find a God who is immanent and yet transcendent, in all and yet above all. In his blindness he demands a religion which is expressed in outward forms and extended by physical forces.

This demand for a kingdom appealing to the physical senses is the source and secret of all the

idolatries and ritualistic forms the world has ever known. It is far easier to bow the knee to an ugly image than to bow the soul to the will of God; far easier to find a crucifix in a huckster's stall and buy it with the coin of the realm than to find the pearl of great price and secure it at the cost of all one hath; far easier to dangle a cross from the girdle than to crucify the flesh with its unhallowed lusts; far easier to finger the beads of a rosary than to enter into the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty; far easier to dip the hand into the font than to plunge the soul into the fountain of life; far easier to repeat the creed than to set forth its truth in daily life! And thousands of men who are afraid to ignore the claims of religion entirely try to ease their consciences by turning to material things. Especially when they fall sick and suspect the end do they want some sort of church recognition in the hope that some mystical influence will operate in the pale of the church to change the state of their hearts and open the gates of bliss. Or professing to be in the kingdom they resort to violence to enforce it upon others, as Mohammed carried his doctrines over Turkey and Arabia into Hindustan and other parts of India at the point of the sword, or the Crusaders went forth to war in the name of the Prince of Peace. Even to-day missionaries are

pretending to preach the gospel in China under the protection of battleships and bristling guns; they inevitably fail because they have not learned the first principles of the kingdom which comes not with observation.

“Neither shall they say, Lo, here, or, Lo, there!” It is not a matter of place, though the error has retained a mighty hold on the minds of men. Frail man in himself has never been able to reach the idea of a God large enough to rule over the whole earth, much less over the uncounted orbs that whirl through space and the endless heavens that lie beyond. The wisdom of Egypt and Persia fell short of such a conception. The sages of Athens and Rome knew nothing of such a Being. Their noblest ideas centered in a great Zeus as a sort of divinity in chief who had lesser gods to aid in administering certain realms: Ceres managing the grain fields, Mars governing the movements of war, Neptune ruling the sea and other divinities having charge of other matters. The Syrians learned something of God from their Jewish neighbors, but they considered him a God of the hills rather than of the plains. The Samaritan said Gerizim was the place where men ought to worship, and with equal assurance the Jew said Jerusalem. In the light of the centuries pilgrims are still journeying to distant shrines or climbing old stairs and kneeling before

ancient images in the hope of finding the secret place of God. Sometimes a certain seat in a meeting house, called a mourners' bench, is considered a seat of rare sanctity, and sinners sitting there are supposed to find an easier salvation. Men are swept with strange emotions in the presence of stained windows and soft voices and deep-toned organs sobbing through frescoed arches, as if such things marked the limits of the divine kingdom. Sometimes they stand by the waters of baptism and say, Lo, here, or they view the emblems of the broken body and shed blood and devoutly say, Lo, there! In all these errors they are merely following the stumbling steps of the old Pharisees and estimating spiritual things by physical standards.

The God of the whole earth is not limited in space. He hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. The heaven and the heaven of heavens can not contain him, much less can any house made with hands confine his eternal presence. Going forward men find him not, neither do they perceive him in turning back; if they turn to the right hand or the left they fail to discern his form, but they sense his existence and are guided by his hand. If they take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there they are seen of his eye and held in his power.

"They hear his voice when thunders roll
Through the wide fields of air;
The waves obey his dread control,
And he is everywhere."

The true kingdom of God as it relates to mankind belongs essentially to the inner life. Jesus explains that it is a kingdom within, the language being distributive and applicable to every individual soul. It is the experience in which the soul accepts the law of God and dwells in fellowship with his presence. Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the soul of the humble and cheer the heart of the contrite." It is he who puts his Spirit in his people and causes them to walk in his statutes and keep his commands. The New Testament repeats the thought in simple terms. It calls men to abide in Christ and live in him, as the branch abides in the vine and is rendered vital and fruitful. To such as love him Jesus makes the promise: "My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Paul turns from the entire ritual of Judaism; he counts the whole tedious round as nothing and less than nothing, that he may win Christ and be found in him, not having his own righteousness measured

by legal demands, but the righteousness which is imparted through faith. He says this is the mystery which was hid from ages and generations, but is made manifest to the saints, to whom God would reveal the riches of his excellence among the nations, which is Christ within establishing the hope of glory and bringing in all the fullness of God.

This is the experience which lifts a man above the clod, and clothes him with imperial dignity and power. Of old the prophet saw a vast valley full of bones, very many and very dry. Over the scene there fell a voice: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel," dead and dry and parted from the source of power. The sound of the prophet's voice, like the trump of resurrection, shook those bones into place, bone to his fellow bone; under the spell there came upon them flesh and sinews and skin, and the valley was full of men all dead, a prey for vultures and jackals and wolves. In an agony of supplication the prophet prayed: "Breathe, O Spirit, upon these slain, that they may live!" In response to the cry the breath of God from the four winds swept down over the dead, their bosoms heaved, their pulses throbbed, their cheeks flushed again, their cold eyes opened and in the strength of God they rose up a mighty host to work the divine will. And the story is a

parable which may be interpreted in every man's life. Alienated from God, who is the source of power, men are limp and lifeless. No schooling, no culture, no legal restraint, no outward forms, no physical processes of any kind are enough to impart life. Human hands may roll the stone from the door of the tomb, human skill may hide the ghastly visage of death, human lips may implore help, but only God can raise the dead and send them forth to life and conquest.

This inner kingdom where God reigns is the scene of life's real conflicts. Sir Edward Creasy tells of the battles that have shaped the destiny of nations; but what are Marathon and Cannæ, Hastings and Waterloo, Gettysburg and Japan Bay or other deadly conflicts in comparison with the struggles that involve the destiny of immortal souls? Oh, there are battles fiercer than any ever fought with machine guns and armed tanks and liquid fire on fields of blood,—battles where no bugles sound nor cannons boom nor engines throb nor bird-men circle the heavens with missiles of death, but where deadlier weapons are used and ghastlier mischief wrought than any ever following physical conflicts! What tongue can tell the pangs that pierce men, as they become the victims of treachery and injustice and obloquy? Who can weigh their anguish, when

“They have been to the funeral of earthly hopes,
And entombed them one by one,
And then alone by the cold hearthstone
Have wooed the midnight gloom”?

There are men who are unable to meet such emergencies. They know nothing of the power that stoops from above. They merely trust in themselves and plunge into the fray, struggling like a giant in chains. Dazed by the din of the conflict and weakened by weariness and thirst they are overcome at last, and they drop down to rise no more. But the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. His battle is like the Armageddon of the Scriptures; the powers of darkness assail the powers of light, and victory is with the light. The strife may be fierce and long, but the good man wins at last. The kingdom of God is in him, and he is clothed with power which nothing can overcome.

This kingdom of power comes not with observation, nevertheless it comes. In the swirl of the city a young man is caught in the snare and sold unto sin. Forgetting the lessons of childhood and the kindling aspirations of youth he gives free rein to the fiery steeds of iniquity and plunges down the way of death. The tears of love and the taunts of scorn are equally vain, and he sinks

deeper into the slough. By and by there comes a letter with a black border. The mother whose loving counsel he despised, but whose parting kiss he remembers so well, has dropped the heavy burden which pressed her down and has passed into the silence. She died of a broken heart,—broken by her boy's sin. Now the boy's heart breaks with remorse. Smitten of loneliness and guilt he hates his sin, he turns to his mother's God and enters the kingdom of peace. Or a man reaches a crisis in his affairs. Brooding over the trouble which is driving him mad he picks up his wife's Bible; he catches a pencil mark, and for the first time in years he reads: "God is our refuge and strength, a present help in time of trouble." Surely it is a time of trouble. He needs help. Needs it so much! He turns to the refuge. He finds the help. He knows the strength which God imparts. Now this, now that, here a little, there a little. No bugle blast nor trumpet peal. No glint of burnished armor nor tramp of hurrying feet. No shout of advancing columns nor rattle and roar of guns.

"Silently as the daylight
 Comes, when night is done,
 Or the crimson streak on evening's cheek
 Fades with the setting sun;
 Silently as the springtime
 Her crown of verdure weaves,
 When all the trees on all the hills
 Put on their countless leaves,"

the kingdom of God comes in the hearts of men,
and coming clothes them with grace and grandeur.

This kingdom is at hand for you and me to-day.
It is a kingdom of peace and power here. It is a
kingdom of glory and dominion over there.

“If you are tired of your load of sin,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If you desire a new life to begin,
Let Jesus come into your heart.

“If you would join the glad songs of the blest,
Let Jesus come into your heart;
If you would enter the mansions of rest,
Let Jesus come into your heart.” Amen.

VIII

JESUS WASHING DISCIPLES' FEET

"After that he poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." JOHN 13:5.

The event here recorded belongs to the closing scenes of our Lord's life on earth. Taken in connection with his later comment it has puzzled many devout souls. In the minds of able and educated men it has sometimes seemed to establish a precedent and institute an ordinance to be observed in the churches. Aurelius Augustine, the great theologian of the fourth century, so understood it. The early Greek church observed what was called the sacrament of foot-washing, and in the days of her imperial dignity the Russian court celebrated the observance with deep solemnity. In the Roman church for a time the service was especially recommended for the remission of certain sins. Frequently it was observed at the consecration of priests and bishops. On other special occasions twelve men chosen to represent the twelve apostles assembled in the Clementine chapel, where they were met by the Pope in official robes, and he sprinkled water on the right foot of each and then wiped the foot and kissed it. Others fol-

lowed on through the centuries, and even yet some of the smaller sects, like the Mennonites and the River Brethren, have insisted that Christians ought to wash one another's feet in imitation of their Lord. Certainly it was not an aimless performance enacted without meaning and without a useful lesson for docile spirits. Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for the Christian in his daily conflicts, and this strange passage is no exception.

The facts as they are set forth in the record ought to be kept clearly in mind. Sometimes a foot-washing, as it is observed by plain and untaught people in some backwoods place, excites levity and even ridicule, but there was an impressive dignity in the entire scene as it was enacted in that upper room. Through the whole procedure there ran a deep seriousness which impressed the disciples and filled them with awe. A background of eternity supported every movement and gave a sense of mystery to every act. Jesus himself wore an air of conscious authority as he took up the unusual task. There fell over him the calm assurance that he shared the Father's confidence and the Father's resources, that he came from God and went to God, and he felt the hour near when he should depart. In such a moment there was no need for haste, and he moved forward in quiet confidence, giving every step a mysterious mean-

ing. He was aware of the destiny that awaited him. He held the issues of eternity in his hands. Rising from the table where they had eaten together he laid aside his outer garment and took a towel and girded himself, the disciples looking on in surprise. Being in the form of a servant he shrank not from assuming the garb of a servant and taking up a servant's task. He poured water into a basin and then stooped to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel where-with he was girded.

Primarily it was the revelation of an important truth. The blind and sinful world judged character by the positions men held. Princes of the gentiles sat in seats of authority and lorded it over their helpless subjects. Their great ones towered aloft scorning those who filled lowly places and served with their hands. It was an arbitrary system which touched nothing essential; it was inevitably deceptive and unjust, and yet it gripped the popular mind and governed the opinions of men. The disciples knew no other measure of greatness, and among themselves they sometimes disputed about the places they were to have in the coming kingdom, whether on the right hand or the left. There was need to show them a better way, and Jesus said: "It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant, and whosoever will be chief,

let him be your slave, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many." Doing what he did he was illustrating the truth which he taught. In the garb of a servant he stooped to wash the feet of men who thought it great to hold high places and receive the service of others rather than render service to them.

It was also a needful service, and it was sanctioned by the customs of the times. Those were not the days of silk hose and buttoned kids and cushioned carriages for those who traveled from place to place. They were the days of open sandals or bare feet, of dusty roads and toilsome trudging footsore and weary, and common hospitality required provision for washing bruised and soiled feet.

The angel who went to Mamre to tell of the birth of Isaac went on foot. There by the oak he heard Abraham say: "If I have found favor in thy sight, I pray thee pass not away from thy servant; let a little water be fetched, and wash your feet and rest under the tree." Lot also sat in the gate of Sodom and saw the messenger coming to announce the doom of the city, and he said: "Turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and wash your feet and tarry all night." The beautiful Abigail knew the duties of a hostess, and she said to the messengers of David: "Let

thy handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord the king." Simon the leper made a feast for Jesus, but he failed in the needed courtesies, and Jesus contrasted his conduct with that of the woman whom Simon disapproved: "Simon, seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hair of her head." There was nothing degrading in what the woman did. Jesus approved it and gave her a blessing. Later he himself felt no shame in girding himself as a servant and stooping to do a servant's work.

Yonder in Knoxville a woman reared in luxury and surrounded with every comfort learned that an old servant had suffered a stroke of paralysis and had become helpless. She went out to see the old negro. She planned to pay her rent. She engaged one to look after her and make her as comfortable as possible. She guaranteed the bills. One day she made another visit and found the helpless old woman unwashed and neglected, those who were paid to attend her having proven unfaithful. Then she shut the door and laid off her own outer garments; she girded herself and stooped over that old servant and washed her and combed her hair and made her bed and swept the room. It was like the service which Jesus ren-

dered when he washed the disciples' feet and wiped them with the towel. Neither he nor she lost anything by rendering the service, and his deed found a place in the sacred word.

It was a service born of love that did not count the sacrifice which it cost. You have sometimes seen a wan figure wrapped in soft raiment and propped with spotless pillows in a big armed chair, and you have seen love ministering in tenderness, pushing back tangled hair, moistening fevered lips, bathing nervous hands, relieving tired limbs, hovering about with a care that seemed to anticipate every want and tried to pack into the few remaining days a wealth of affection which no words could express. Jesus also stood near the end and the moments hastened past. He heard the distant knell that sounded his departure, and with eager desire he was impelled to set his love in a memorable and melting form. He wanted to give an unforgettable token of what service love could render, and could render it without marring the greatness of the lover. He was host for the occasion, and he provided water to wash the feet of those whom he had called to the feast, himself taking the servant's place. His gentleness was softened by the sense of early separation, and it took on the quality of a parting blessing.

No wonder Peter so impulsive shrank back protesting: "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" Hear-

ing the word that unless he was washed he had no part with the Lord, no wonder he cried: "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" For months those feet had been subject to his authority and had gone forth to bear the message of peace and good will to needy men; they had been honored in treading the paths the Lord had walked and in leaving their prints in the same dust that bore the marks of Jesus' feet. Probably they carried scars gotten in the service, weary feet, gnarled feet, uncomely feet, and at last as Jesus drew near the end of the journey he took them in his hands, and bathed them in the cooling bowl, and wiped them with the soft towel which he carried. It was a token of the boundless love that needed no urging to set it in motion.

The good people who have seen here the establishment of an ordinance to be observed in the churches have taken only an outward view of the matter. They have made it a Christian service to wash feet that need no washing, and like the Pope in the Clementine chapel they have usually washed only one foot and have left their job only half done. Such empty service caused Martin Luther to denounce what he called hypocritical foot-washing and to recommend private baths instead. The books of the New Testament tell of baptisms by the thousand; they speak of the communion and give instructions about its observance,

but they nowhere tell of disciples coming together to wash one another's feet. If the practice was observed at all, it was observed as a private hospitality rather than a public function.

In the original record the obligation is limited to those whose feet Jesus had washed: "If I then have washed your feet!" On Andrew and Peter, on James and John, on Thomas and Matthew, on Philip and Bartholomew, on James the Less and Thaddeus, on Simon the Canaanite and possibly on Judas Iscariot the duty was laid, as he said: "If I then have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." They heard the solemn assurance, and no doubt they performed the duty assigned as occasion arose, although no record of it has been preserved. The next day poor Judas dropped from the ranks, slain by his own hands, a victim of remorse and shame. Later James the brother of John was killed with the sword, others of the twelve in turn heard the call and passed into the silence until all were gone, and not one remained whose feet Jesus had washed.

This solemn event has a deeper meaning than the mere washing of feet already cleansed. The deeper teaching lies in the words: "I have given an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." It means that every soul who has received a blessing from him is bound in the holiest obliga-

tions to pass it on: "As I have done unto you." He has not stooped to wash your feet or mine, but with his own blood he has come to cleanse us from our sins and to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, and he says: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." "Freely ye have received, freely give."

The Wesleys may be converted with their mother's slipper and urged into the church, they may be educated for the ministry and harnessed with holy orders, but like a painted ship on a painted sea their mechanical services are destitute of life and power. Later Jesus does something for them, washing them in his own blood and making them clean every whit; then in the blessed assurance of what he has done for them they go forth endowed with strength almost divine to carry the grace to others, and as they go they exclaim:

"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my Lord and King,
The triumphs of his grace!"

Merely cultured and taught in the lore of the schools Francis Lyte may struggle in vain to impress the mysteries of the gospel on minds as dark as his own, but when he discerns the face of him who is the chiefest among the thousands he devoutly says:

“Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Destitute, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shalt be.”

In nature's night Saul of Tarsus may breathe out threatenings and slaughter against the righteous, but when the scales have fallen from his eyes and he has seen the light he becomes a debtor to the whole world and is impelled to pass on to others the blessing which he has received. The law of the kingdom is this: “Ye should do as I have done unto you.”

There are many Christians who fashion their conduct by what men have done to them rather than by what Jesus has done for them. Often they fail in the simplest duties of their profession merely because they think somebody else has failed at some point. The weaklings who fall out of line and flounder in the slough usually try to excuse their unworthy course by citing what somebody else has done or failed to do. They forget that Jesus makes every man accountable to him and not to another, and he says to every one who names his name: “Do as I have done unto you.”

He has not come to you or to me with bowl and towel to wash bruised and soiled feet, but he has come with forgiveness for every sin committed in his sight, and he says we ought to do the same for those who have trespassed against us. His for-

giveness is born of love, and he writes the new command that we love one another as he has loved us. The difference between the best in man and the worst is very small in comparison with the abyss which separates between the Son of God and the sons of men, but his love spanned the abyss and brought forgiveness and salvation to every willing soul. Surely the servant is not greater than his Lord, and by every sacred obligation he binds you and me and all who accept his grace to forgive and love and do as he has done for us.

Standing, basin in hand and girded for service, Jesus sets an example which the world sorely needs to-day. There are brave men, earnest men, serious men, whose hearts fail for fear and for looking to the things that are coming upon the earth. They see the powers shaken and things established through centuries of struggle and suffering tottering on their foundations and threatening to fall. In a world made good and very good, ready at the touch of industry to bloom and blossom as the rose and furnish food and gladness for the millions, they see nations shadowed with suspicion and rent with turmoil. They see families wrecked by illicit lust and cynical selfishness and children left without due parental care, while sin and guilt walk hand in hand with leaden-eyed despair.

Above all this dark scene Jesus stands girded to serve and ready to stoop down to the lowest and the poorest. He is able to wash the stains from the feet and also from the head and the heart. In him is life and the life is the light of men. He is girded to serve. He is inspired to teach.

“Hushed be the raucous notes of the schools,
Volume and pamphlet, preachment and speech,
The words of the wise and the prattle of fools:
Let Jesus the Nazarene teach.

“Who has the key to the future, but he?
Who else can untangle the knots in the skein?
Groaning and struggling, men have fought to be free:
They have groaned and struggled in vain.

“Bewildered and baffled and sunk in despair,
To him as of old let them turn and beseech;
Let them humble their pride and send up their prayer;
Let them hear the Son of God teach.”

Moved by a love that never fails he shows the way, bidding men follow him and deal with others in the same gracious spirit that he has shown toward them. He says they shall know, as they follow on. Let us hear him and obey. Amen.

IX

JESUS PRAYING FOR ENEMIES

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."
LUKE 23:34.

Crucifixion as a mode of execution is traced back to the ancient Phœnicians. It was widely practiced among pagan nations two thousand years ago. The unnatural position and violent tension of the body, the nails piercing the hands and the feet where nerves and tendons abound, the exposure of the wounds to weather and the annoyance of insects, the inflammation tending to gangrene and general mortification, the hectic fever clotting the blood and inducing a throbbing headache, the intense thirst and restlessness and longing for the death that seems delayed, combine to make crucifixion the cruelest form of death inflicted in the long annals of man's inhumanity to man. Cicero refers to it as the extreme form of torture. History records instances in which the victims of crucifixion spent their last hours bewailing their sorrowful fate and trying to excite pity for their pains or in raving out the bitterest curses upon the heads of those who did them hurt, but here is a different scene.

Jesus had abundant occasion for heaping maledictions upon his enemies. From his infancy and on through all his public career he was hated and hounded by jealous Herods who dogged his footsteps and sought his life. He was betrayed into the hands of sinners by one who came with soft words and a kiss. He was accused before the court by men who spoke for their own personal advantage and not in the interest of the truth. He was mocked and scourged and spit upon by men whose souls were steeped in sin, and in all justice he might have lifted the arm of power and struck them dead in the presence of the gaping throng. The nethermost caverns of the deepest hell would have been a fit dungeon for iniquities such as theirs, but in the midst of deserved wrath there was mercy and the prayer: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

In the day of his popularity when thronging multitudes followed his footsteps and hung upon his words Jesus opened his mouth and taught them, saying: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use and persecute you." It was a great thing to say, and there in the serene atmosphere of the mountain top and far away from the maddening crowd

it seemed a magnificent ideal to erect, but a thing impossible of attainment in practical life. Even to-day after the lapse of the centuries men who name the name of Christ and have hope of redemption through his precious blood sometimes make a jest of the Saviour's words: "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Speaking of the matter some time ago a distinguished minister of the gospel, splendid of body as well as of mind, said: "Yes, and if I turned the other cheek and he slapped it, I'd everlastingly knock the stuffin' out o' him!" But here in the very heat of the strife that minister's Master shows the spirit that he commends to others. In the hour when the indignity has reached its climax, when the wounds inflicted by the scourging and the thorn crown and the nails are festering and the choking thirst is gripping his throat, when all forms of bodily pain are augmented by the sneers of ignorance taunting him with his helplessness, when the darkness over all the land seems to indicate that God's patience is almost at an end, then he comes with his gracious intercession, praying for those who spitefully use and persecute him and saying: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

This remarkable prayer is worthy of devout study. It is addressed to God the Father. There are men of distinct ability who think of God as

a Being dwelling afar off, holding the stars in his right hand and watching the machinery of the universe performing its silent evolutions and bringing seedtime and harvest in ceaseless succession. There are others who speak of God as the inscrutable power manifest in all the realms of nature, and sometimes they call it the power that makes for righteousness or the power that accounts for things. Such ideas spring up naturally, but they are dim and uncertain and they express only a part of the truth. Moses prays for a vision of the divine glory in the person of God, and the answer comes: "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live." Paul speaks of God as the blessed and only Potentate, King of kings and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality dwelling in light which no man can approach, whom no man hath seen or can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. Elsewhere Jesus says: "No man knoweth the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him"; but for himself he speaks with perfect assurance. He has the purity of heart that sees God, and the spirituality of life that understands the secret place of the most High, knowing even as he is known. Without the aid of the bush that burned before Moses or the tempest that swept before Job, without the visitation of the sprite that talked with Socrates or the sibyl that interpreted Roman ora-

cles, he lived in the presence of God by an unceasing fellowship, and nothing could shake his faith. Through all the din and tumult of the mob, through all the mists of sweat and tears, through the pall of darkness that covered the earth from the sixth hour unto the ninth, he saw the eternal throne and he appealed to God his Father.

Face to face with eternity men are often silent, but when they speak rationally they are credited with a purpose to speak truly and faithfully. It is an hour when shams are useless and hypocrisies vain. A dying man's testimony is usually accepted in the courts with all the solemnity of a sworn statement, and the conditions of this utterance give it the sanctity of an oath. Jesus is dying under the charge of blasphemy, because he has said he is the Christ the Son of God, and in the very hour and article of death he re-asserts the truth and addresses God as his Father. He is not appealing in his own behalf. There is abundant reason for him to recount his wonderful works in the healing of men, and his wonderful words of kindness and love, and to tell of the ingratitude that has been shown and to ask for divine vengeance on creatures so base. There are legions of angels looking down upon the scene and waiting to bear him aid and blast the wicked with the breath of their power, but he restrains their holy zeal. In Isaiah's distant vision he is seen bearing

the sins of many and making intercession for the transgressors, and here the vision is translated into fact. He pleads for the men who do him wrong and put him to undeserved death: "Father, forgive them."

The spirit which he shows in this prayer is as strong proof of his divinity and Messiahship as his claim to be the Son of God. The same spirit is the highest proof of a man's salvation. When the disciples came asking to be taught how to pray, Jesus said, "After this manner pray ye: Forgive us our trespasses as we also forgive those who trespass against us." In the same connection he says: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses." Moreover, the Christian who is unforgiving can not get forgiveness for others who have sinned and come short of the glory of God. John Riddick of Norfolk tells of going out to hold a meeting in one of the old churches of the adjacent territory. He found everything lovely to look upon. The people filled the house and were orderly and attentive. The singing was led by one of the deacons, and everybody seemed willing to help. The Sunday-school officers and teachers were alert and diligent. The preacher began his labors with high hopes, and

continued from day to day with no results. Sunday came and they passed into the second week, but still the gospel failed to move men toward the kingdom of God. At the close of the service Riddick said: "Brethren, I have preached here a week, and so far as I can see nobody has been converted. It is the same gospel that has been greatly blessed in the conversion of souls elsewhere, and I do not know what is the matter. Do any of you know?" He stood waiting quietly for the answer to his question, while a spirit of expectancy seemed to hold the audience. Then one of the best men in the church rose up with tears running down his cheeks and said he was to blame for it all. He had had hot words about a line fence with one of the other brethren, and had hardly spoken to him in six months, and he wanted to confess his fault and ask forgiveness. And the other brother whose name had not been called at all rose up in the far part of the house and said it was all his fault, and he wanted to ask forgiveness and get right with his brother and with God. Then the two started to the front, where they met and shook hands and fell upon each other's necks and wept out their penitence and their joy, and a great revival began at once. Forgiving they were forgiven and were ready to ask God's forgiveness on others.

The plea which Jesus offers to the Father is the sinners' ignorance: "They know not what they

do." This plea is distinctly recognized in the Scriptures. In Jerusalem Peter charges the people with denying the holy One and the just and desiring a murderer to be given unto them and killing the Prince of Life: "But I wot that through ignorance ye did it, brethren, as did also your rulers." The rude soldiers of Cæsar, trained and hardened in the art of butchery, knew little or nothing of the character and claims of Jesus and were merely executing the orders of their superiors in what they did. The multitudes who gathered about Pilate's judgment hall or stood in mockery about the cross were swayed by blind passions rather than any clear understanding of the issues involved. Herod and Pilate were guided by their political interests more than by any high purpose to do right. Even the chief priests and elders of the people felt justified in taking counsel against Jesus to put him to death. They resorted to ugly schemes and they yielded to base passions, but in it all they hoped to accomplish good. Ignorantly they were working out the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God according to the decree that Christ should suffer and die for the sins of men, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. It is the hidden wisdom of God ordained before the foundation of the world, which none of the princes of

this world knew, for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Saul of Tarsus is numbered among the worst of sinners, he calls himself their chief, his very breath a flame of hatred and scorching ruin as he verily thought he ought to do many things contrary to the precepts and practices of Jesus; he recalls his sinful career with shame, and he magnifies the mercy which came to him because he did it all in ignorance and unbelief.

There are many souls who are walking in the ways of sin to-day, who do not fully understand. Some of them are allured by the mere pleasures of sin, and they do not know that they are sinning against eternal love and boundless compassion and are sporting on the brink of endless despair. Yonder in Virginia two young people were attending a protracted meeting. The young lady was deeply impressed by the sermon, and was deeply moved when the invitation was given for persons to accept Christ, but she shook her head when the question was pressed upon her. After the services the cars went scurrying away and she and the young man she was with went into wreck and she was dreadfully hurt. As they drew her out of the wreckage and tenderly bore her away, her face white with the pallor of death and her muscles twitching with pain, she whispered: "Oh, I did not know I'd die so soon!" Ignorantly and in unbelief

she had lost her last chance to make public confession of her Saviour. Or there is a young man who has professed faith and joined the church; now he is drifting out on the tides of worldliness and sin, grieving his father and mother and his pastor and others who love him best, but he does not know the full meaning of what he is doing. He does not know the harm he is doing the younger children in the family and how he is disappointing the young people out of the church, who even feel ashamed that he does not live up to his profession of faith. Or there is a man who has been a church member for years; his children are growing up around him and are looking to him for an example in right living. He is dropping out of his church attendance and out of the prayer meeting and he does not read his Bible at home or in the Sunday school. He knows he is not doing right, but he does not know how much he is injuring his children and his brethren in the church. It is crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting him to an open shame, and it is done largely through ignorance and unbelief. The prayer of Jesus covers it in part, but there is a limit beyond which the prayer does not go. There is no account that Pilate or Herod or Annas or Caiaphas ever repented; they were not lost because of their part in the crucifixion, but because of their hardness of heart in refusing to respond to the mercy

of God. The apostle says: "If we sin wilfully after that we have received a knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the wicked. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord."

There were some who accepted the forgiveness offered in this wonderful prayer. About fifty days later when the day of Pentecost was fully come there came together great multitudes; suddenly there was a sound as of a rushing mighty wind filling all the place and imparting tongues of flame. Peter, so lately trembling and afraid, stood up with great boldness in the presence of men who had demanded the life of Jesus, and he charged them with their wickedness in crucifying the Lord of glory. He stirred their sleeping consciences and caused them to cry out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" He pointed them to the way of repentance and faith shown in obedience to the gospel's precepts; they that gladly re-

ceived the word were baptized, and the same day there were added to the disciples about three thousand souls, who continued in all the gladness of the Lord's appointed ways. For them the prayer of Jesus was answered, as it is answered for every soul who is willing to accept the gift of his grace.

“Come then with all your wants and wounds,
Your every burden bring;
Here love, unchanging love, abounds,
A deep celestial spring.”

X

JESUS DYING FOR SINNERS

"The chief priests mocking, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others, himself he can not save." MATTHEW 27: 41, 42.

This is not the voice of affection, nor of friendship, nor of kindness, nor of sympathy. It is the language of gloating and gratified revenge, and it discloses a depth of baseness and depravity which sends a shudder of pain through every sensitive spirit. At first the religious leaders of the times were not inclined to take Jesus seriously, and they did not care to dignify him with too much attention. In the early days of his ministry they asked in dubious tones: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joses and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" Just so. Later they tried to discredit him before the public by calling him a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, a mere nobody from nowhere and without standing among the cultured classes. Their policy of detraction failed to destroy his popularity or to dampen his ardor, and with a vexation which they could

hardly conceal they felt that sterner measures must be adopted. Perplexed and resentful they began to counsel together concerning the proper course to pursue. They decided to end the whole matter by putting him out of the way, and they proceeded at once to execute their evil designs. The whole sad story is sketched in the sacred records: the increasing animosity, the subtle schemes, the base betrayal, the farcical trial, the unjust sentence, the needless cruelty and at last the sickening scenes of heartless mockery. In all the literature of hatred there is nothing that shows a more malignant spirit than appears in the conduct of these men lingering about the cross

“On which the Prince of glory died,”

watching the victim of their rage and uttering the mocking words: “He saved others, himself he can not save.”

This tragic scene shows Jesus apparently helpless. It presents two conceptions that may be studied with interest and profit. The first is the human conception. Those priests and scribes and elders of the olden time were practical men, and they took a very practical view of the case. They saw Jesus subject to human power and nailed to the cross as other criminals were. They trusted in the strong arm of the law, in the rigid quality of wood and nails, in the fidelity of the hands that

drove the nails and fixed him there, and they felt entirely safe in issuing the challenge: "If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" Seeing him unable to escape their hands and save himself, they judged that he was not the Son of God and was in no way able to save anybody else. They spoke of his saving others, but they spoke with a scorn which denied the truth of what they said. The fact that he could not save himself gave their irony a keener edge: He saved others, he did wonderful things in distant places, he was the Son of God off yonder, he stopped the storm on Gennesaret, he healed the leper at the foot of the hill, he cured the paralytic in Capernaum, he cooled the fever in Bethsaida, he relieved the deaf in Decapolis, he cast out the devil in Gadara, he raised the dead in Bethany and in Nain, but here in the presence of the rulers and dignitaries of the realm he cannot save himself and come down from the cross! By such reasoning they justified their conduct toward him, and to their own satisfaction they demonstrated the folly of those who followed him.

They were merely blind leaders of the blind, and they assumed that saving self was the supreme thing in life. They made that the test of charac-

ter and success, and they esteemed failure there a token of disaster and disgrace. It was the essence of Darwinism centuries before Darwin was born, and it left the race to the swift and the battle to the strong. The successors of these blind old scribes and Pharisees are fond of asserting that self-preservation is the first law of nature, and they say it with an air of superior wisdom as if they had announced a noble truth. They fail to note that self-preservation is a law of nature depraved, of nature unregenerate, of nature groaning and travailing in pain in hope of a better day. It is the law of the jungle, where nature is red in tooth and claw and where survival is secured by fitness to fight down all forms of opposition and survive all enmity. It belongs to the conscienceless realm, where beasts and birds and reptiles save themselves by destroying without pity and without remorse. In one of the old McGuffey readers James K. Paulding presents the case in impressive terms. One summer morning he rambled in the quiet woods seeking refreshment and enjoying the wonders about him. After a while he rested by a silvery brook, listening to the sound of the waters and studying the beauties displayed everywhere. Suddenly he seemed to be bitterly assailed by birds and beasts and various creatures that have long been the prey of men, and his conscience began to utter the voice of condemnation.

Then he was relieved by seeing the same beasts and birds and reptiles saving themselves according to nature's law and devouring one another with the same pitiless greed that they had attributed to him. They were forever limited to the lower realms of life, where there was nothing immoral in what they did, and they lived in harmony with the laws of their being, though they saved themselves by the destruction of others. It was the law of nature, but it was not the law of grace, and it had no place in the gracious scheme for a redeemed world.

The outstanding iniquity of all time is the elevation of this law of the jungle into the higher domain of rational life. The thief who steals, the robber who kills, the swindler of every type who plies his arts to win the means of support, even the gay grisette who barter virtue for victuals and clothes undertakes to justify the iniquity on the plea that one must live, and the plea itself is false. There is no necessity that binds one to live: the supreme obligation is to do what is right, let come what will. The nations that pour out treasure and life in the effort to wreck other nations are simply moved by the old Pharisee notion that they must save themselves, even though they mock and crucify the Son of God. David Starr Jordan says the most ghastly and intolerable burden which the race has to carry is

the burden of armaments and armed conflicts, and the only possible excuse for it is that one class or nation may save itself by destroying others. It is the law of might which wins by the process of destruction, and it works mischief wherever it is applied. The Russian term Bolsheviki means simply the ruling party, and in itself it is entirely innocent. There, however, the ruling party is composed largely of illiterate people who in the past have suffered awful oppression and injustice, and in bitterness of spirit they turn to wreak vengeance on those whom they regard as their enemies and to save themselves by destroying others. Their ruthless and unjust conduct has given their name an evil import, and has made it a thing to be dreaded by all who love justice and order.

There are smaller groups that adopt the same ruinous rule, which subverts the divine order and works mischief everywhere. Yonder is a body of skilled laborers operating a great plant and turning out products that are necessary in supplying human needs and softening the hard conditions of life. Many of them profess the name of Jesus and in normal times they enjoy the church and the privileges which it offers, but there arises some question of hours or wages or some matter of administration, and those workmen on whom so much depends quit their places and walk out,

leaving every wheel still and every engine cold. What are they doing? They are turning back to the law of nature, which is the law of the jungle, and trying to save themselves at the expense of others. Or it is another great factory fitted with the finest machinery and costing millions shut down and going to waste. The owner has gone down and emptied the place and locked the door, while faithful men who have helped him to every dollar in his bank are driven to idleness or compelled to seek work elsewhere. What is the matter? The owner of the plant pretends that he is trying to save himself, when as a matter of fact he is in no danger whatever; he has millions of dollars at his command, and he is simply trying to enforce his will by applying the jungle law of the ancient scribes and Pharisees. And there comes great groups of farmers. They are honorable men, good men, church members, fine citizens. They support the world, furnishing food and raiment for all the families of the earth, and without them the race can not continue. They have come together, not to discuss ways and means for making more to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, but they have come to devise some plan to reduce acreage and make less. What are they doing? They are forgetting the Lord that bought them and for the time they are sitting at the feet of the priests and scribes and elders

and are measuring life by their ability to save themselves. It is the practical human view; but it is only human.

There is a second view which comes from God. Jesus seemed helpless on the cross, but he was not constrained by physical conditions, neither was he bound by statutory enactment. A convict may be killed in the service of the state or a conscript may die in the effort to carry out the orders of his superior, but neither the one nor the other voluntarily lays down his life in the cause he serves. Jesus came into the world to save others rather than himself, and there was no way for him to accomplish his purpose and at the same time save himself from the humiliation and pain of the cross. He was not awed into submission through fear of the Roman guard, neither was he held to his purpose by the bonds that were tied about his limbs or the nails that were driven into his flesh. No man robbed him of his life, but he went a willing sacrifice to lay it down as a propitiation for the sins of the world. The necessity which impelled him dwelt in his own character. He was bound to be true to himself, that he might furnish strong ground for assurance, when men condemned of their own consciences fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them. He was held in the grip of necessity binding him

to fulfill the prophecy which said: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep dumb before her shearers he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of the people was he smitten, and he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death." He was obliged to verify his own word, that he was the good shepherd who gave his life for the sheep. He was obliged to be lifted up, that he might gain the power to draw men unto himself. Whatever the mystery involved in it all, he was not robbed of his life, but he laid it down that he might take it again, being put to death in the flesh and made alive in the spirit, that he might make atonement and bring men to God, but saving others he could not save himself.

The principle which governed him has abundant illustration in the social fabric to-day. Current magazines and other forms of literature are saying a good deal on the subject of motherhood, and in delicate ways they are trying to guide women back to the divine idea of giving themselves unselfishly to the task of nurturing children and bringing them up in an atmosphere of love. It is a service which can not be rendered by self-centered women who itch for fame on the plat-

form or the stage, and for selfish ends are willing to smother the tender sentiments which God has implanted in the mother heart or else lavish them on a poodle-dog. True mothers, true fathers, who are true to the immortal spirits that have been committed to their care, can never save themselves, if they succeed in bringing their sons and daughters to usefulness and honor in the world. Especially can they not save themselves, if they hope at last to present their own faultless before the throne with exceeding joy and be able to say in rapture: "Here, Lord, am I and here are the children whom thou hast given, safe, all safe at God's right hand." Saving others they can not save themselves.

There is also a broader application of the principle in the broader activities of life. In the orderly administrations of time there is a place for every man, and it is a place which no other can fill. Sometimes it is a place of the lowest drudgery under conditions that are essentially offensive, and yet it is a place that must be filled. There are other places less taxing, which demand the energies of body and mind and the hazard of health and limb. The men who accept such places and render the service demanded are able to save others, themselves they can not save, and whether they know it or not there is an ethical

quality in what they do. The men who go down into deep mines, begrimed with dust and slowly poisoned with noxious gases, often bearing in their marred bodies and twisted limbs the marks of what they have endured, have not been able to save themselves, but they have brought forth the hidden treasures of the earth and have saved others from the hardships which they have borne. The men who toil about mammoth furnaces, glowing with a heat that withers the frame and glaring with a light that parches the eyes, are giving themselves body and mind to their tasks, and there is a sense in which they are saving others, but they are not saving themselves. The multitudes who fill the great manufacturing plants, holding their places while their faces fade and their vigor wanes, are living by the holy law of self-sacrifice; they are taxing brawn and brain under trying conditions, that in an easier state others may wear purple and fine linen and may fare sumptuously every day. Charles Kingsley, you recall, tells the story of the fishermen by the sea, and it is a story repeated in substance in the lives of thousands who willingly give themselves, that others may live in ease and may keep their hands clean and their muscles free from strain:

“Three fishers went sailing away to the west,—
 Away to the west, as the sun went down,
Each thinking of the woman that loved him best ;
 And the children stood watching them out of the
 town.
For men must work, and women must weep,
And there’s little to earn and many to keep,
 And the harbor bar be moaning.

“Three wives sat up in the lighthouse tower
 Trimming the lamps, as the sun went down.
They looked at the squall and they looked at the
 shower,
 And the night-wrack came rolling up ragged and
 brown.
For men must work, and women must weep,
Though storms be sudden and waters deep,
 And the harbor bar be moaning.

“Three corpses lay out on the shining sands,
 In the morning gleam, as the tide went down,
And the women are weeping and wringing their
 hands
 For the men who will never come back to town.
For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner it’s over the sooner the sleep,
 And good-by to the bar and its moaning.”

These toilers in their varied callings belong
to the vast army of uncrowned heroes who in
every walk of life give themselves to the tasks
that fall to their lot and for love’s sake shun no
sacrifice, that they may save other eyes from tears
and other forms from fainting. Many of them are
merely following the impulses born in their own

souls; they have no idea of doing anything great, and yet they are walking in the footsteps of God manifest in the flesh. In their simple way they are doing the sort of thing that Jesus did, when he gave himself to work atonement and save men from their sins. It was for love's sake, that he hung upon the shameful cross.

“Was it for crime that I had done,
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!

“Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When Christ the mighty Maker died
For man the creature's sin!

“Thus might I hide my blushing face
While his dear cross appears;
Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,
And melt mine eyes to tears.

“But drops of grief can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe;
Here, Lord, I give myself away,
'Tis all that I can do.” Amen.

XI

JESUS BRINGING REDEMPTION

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
EPHESIANS 1:7.

This brief text rings with assurance and presents the central thought of divine revelation and the central purpose of divine providence. It is set among such phrases as "blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ," "chosen in him before the foundation of the world," "enlightened that ye may know," "predestinated unto the adoption of children," "sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." It speaks of a theme that has filled the ages with hope and gladness and made the heavens resound with praise. In ancient Uz Job knows a living Redeemer who shall stand upon the earth in the latter day revealing God in the flesh and dispelling all forms of doubt. David by faith beholds him as a great God and Saviour, none like unto him and none like the people whom he has redeemed. Receiving from God the message: "Ye have sold yourselves for nought, and ye shall be redeemed without money," Isaiah says: "The Redeemer shall come to Zion and to them that turn from transgression in Jacob." From remote

times the hope of the race has rested in the promise of a Redeemer able to impart forgiveness of sins, various prophets sustaining the hope by definite assurance; and in the fullness of the years God sends forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, making it possible for them to receive the adoption of sons and to call God their Father. Sustained by such hope the aged Anna waits in the temple with fastings and prayers, and as she looks into the face of the baby Jesus she gives thanks unto God and speaks words of comfort to all who look for redemption. Here in fellowship with the eternal world and filled with the Holy Ghost Paul rejoices in God the Father who finds a way to make sinners accepted in the beloved Son: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

This deep saying presents a theme that is worthy of devout study, if only men are willing to call in the wanderings of their minds and give God a chance in their hearts. Redemption concerns every rational creature, and it ought to be understood by all. It means buying back something that has been allowed to slip away. It means paying the price and recovering whatever has been seized or pawned or forfeited in any way.

Recently the Associated Press told of a missionary in China who was seized by bandits and carried away to the mountains, where she was held in subjection and ruled by the will of her captors. She was overwhelmed and helpless. She had neither strength to overcome her enemies nor money to buy her freedom, and there stretched before her only days or years of humiliation and servitude base and debasing and in the end the prospect of death among aliens and enemies. The only hope that cheered her lay in a possible deliverance wrought by others, and it was left to loving friends to pay the price and redeem her from the hand of the enemy and set her free. Yonder in Chicago Bobby Franks was missing one day. His anxious parents with ample means set about to find their lost child, and after some days there came a message that he was held in captivity and must be redeemed. Or in a smaller way a man pawns his watch and leaves it in the keeping of another, and it must be redeemed or forfeited forever to the man who holds it. In spiritual things the idea is just the same, and the redemption mentioned in the text means the deliverance of the soul from bondage to sin and Satan and from the pollution of the service which Satan always exacts.

The need of such redemption is evident to every

man who accepts the truth of the Scriptures. There is not a normal person on earth who can read the story of Bobby Franks or the story of the captured missionary without a sense of pity and resentment, but there is something more moving and pitiful than any story of bodily captivity and physical suffering. Bobby Franks was struck senseless by a blow on the head and later kicked into the sewer, and all his physical pain was soon over. The missionary, seized and carried away to the robbers' camp, was shocked and outraged for a season, but if there were no other relief the end was not far away. The more pitiful thing is the case of a man, a woman, a boy, a girl, created in the image of God and made an immortal soul worth more than all the worlds, and that man, that woman, that boy, that girl, held in bondage to Satan and made a drudge in a debasing service that ends in death eternal. The Bible speaks very clearly on the subject. It says men are caught in the snares that are laid for their feet and are led captive of the devil at his will. The figure is taken from the custom of pagan rulers who returned from battle with their captives tied to their chariots and led through the streets of Rome as a spectacle for the gaping throngs. Who was it that seized a

lot of people that beautiful Sunday morning, the first day of the week,

“sweet day of rest
That saw the Lord arise,”

and rigged them up in sporting clothes, and led them captive through the streets, while the children stood watching them out of the town and saw them hauled away to the golf links and set to grinding in the mills of the Philistines? It was not Jesus who led them, nor was it the banner of the cross that floated over them; not one of the sorrowful captives got any rest of soul, and not one of them can ever recall the scene with any sense of pleasure. Who was it that came into the Sunday school that day and cast an invisible chain about Christian men and women appointed of God to set an example for the young, and silently drew them away from the place of prayer and from the influences of the sanctuary and from the worship of the holy Name? It was not the Lord that bound them and led them away; rather he left them word not to forsake the assembling of themselves together and he promised to be in the midst of them, bearing witness and strengthening faith. The apostle says there is a spirit that works in the children of disobedience, who cunningly ensnares men and binds his captives to serve for the wages of death. His method

is illustrated in the case of Samson, who could not be overcome in open fight, but was at last deceived and robbed of his strength and deprived of sight and set to grinding in the mills of the mocking Philistines. To-day there are thousands more who have been caught and led in chains and made to do the devil's work. Except the few who have been called and sealed of the spirit, the whole world lies in wickedness before God, there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness and their feet swift to shed blood, destruction and misery are in their ways and the ways of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. They have sinned every one and have come short of the glory of God, and even now are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

The strongest figures of speech are called into use to impress the solemn truth that by nature all men are sold under sin and are living in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, all are indebted and have nothing to pay, all are helpless and in need of divine aid. The clouds and darkness that settled over the mountain at the giving of the law, the quaking so terrible that

Moses was much afraid, the voice that shook the earth and also the heavens merely gave emphasis to the majesty of the divine presence and the need of a Mediator between God and man. The flood that destroyed the world of the ungodly in the days of Noah, the fire and brimstone that consumed the cities of the plain in Lot's time, the overthrow of Nineveh and Babylon, the famine that cut off the whole staff of bread in Jerusalem, the earthquake that wrecked San Francisco and Tokio and other cities in their turn, all are chosen symbols of the wrath to come which men are warned to flee. These temporal scourges which have befallen rebellious spirits in the past indicate the terrors of the coming time, when the heavens shall depart as a scroll rolled together, and every mountain and island shall be removed out of their places, and kings of the earth and great men, chief captains and mighty men and every bond man and every free man shall hide themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains and shall say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

There are gross materialists who deny the reality of sin and the dreadful guilt which it entails, there are also soft sentimentalists who think the

case not so bad, but both the one and the other will realize the mistake after a while. Yonder in a western city a young woman was sitting in a porch swing talking with a friend. There came in a little dog that looked friendless and tired and hungry. In very kindness of heart the girl bent over the dog and patted it on the head and spoke kindly words, and the dog backed off and snapped the hand that petted him and struck a deadly poison into the girl's blood. They hurried her off to the hospital, but it was all in vain. In a little while she was writhing in pain and foaming at the mouth and barking like a dog. There was the wretched mother walking the halls of the building and wringing her hands in despair, while the girl's body twisted in terrible convulsions. There was the young man who loved the girl better than he loved his own life walking about and sobbing out his unutterable grief over what his sweetheart was suffering. Hosts of friends poured out their tears in helpless agony till death ended the scene, and then they bore the quiet form away and laid it in the tomb. The poor child did not know; she petted the mad dog, and she was bitten to death.

To-day there are thousands of girls and boys and thousands of men and women who are petting sin and fondling sin and welcoming sin and nursing sin, and all the while the old serpent, the devil

Satan lurking in the shadows, is striking his poison into their souls and sending them down to death. They must be healed; they must be redeemed from their enemies; they must be delivered from the power of sin, else they must dwell in the region and shadow of death and at last depart from the presence of God. Mother and friends may weep in vain over the dying girl, because human resources are not enough to stay the tide of poison that surges through her veins; but God is able to provide a remedy for sins of the deepest dye. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." In him there is redemption, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.

Hear the voice of the angel coming to Joseph in a dream and saying: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost, and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." The salvation which he brings includes every form of peril and every grade of guilt. "This man because he continueth ever hath an unchangeable priesthood, therefore he is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them." The apostle says he gave himself to redeem us

from all iniquity and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. He gave himself, and this is the price of the redemption which he provides. Bobby Franks' father was asked to pay \$20,000 to redeem his son and get him back home. The Chinese bandits demanded \$5,000 for the life and freedom of their victim. The sums required would have been gladly paid, and any sums would not have been too much, if only they had virtue to effect the desired result; but all the gold in all the mines and all the gems in all the sands were not sufficient to purchase redemption for a single soul.

“When I was sinking down,
Sinking down, sinking down;
When I was sinking down
Beneath God's righteous frown,
Christ laid aside his crown
For my soul.”

Being in the form of God he thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but he made himself of no reputation and took on him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He fulfilled the word of the prophet: “There shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness.” In him is re-

demption through the blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. Peter speaks to the scattered saints chosen in Christ and elect unto obedience, and he says: "Ye know that ye were not redeemed from the slavery of your past follies and sins by means of corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these last times for you who believe in God." The apostle further explains that Christ having come into the world a high priest of good things yet to be through a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with human hands, nor with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, entered once for all into the holy place, having obtained an eternal redemption. He argues that if the blood of beasts and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean wrought peace with God for the time, much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself a spotless sacrifice, cleanse the consciences of men from dead works to serve the living God. In this confidence William Cowper sings:

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

“The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day;
And there may I, as vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.”

It shows the work of grace. Paul says we are raised up together by the Father's power and made to sit together in fellowship with Jesus the Christ, that in the ages to come we may be shown the riches of grace in his kindness toward us through the Redeemer, and surely it will take ages to come to show the wonders of it all. On Patmos John gets a glimpse of things to come. He sees the rapturous spirits gathered from every land; they gaze in awe upon the face that was more marred than the face of any man; they prepare to sing his praises, and through every arch and aisle of the heavenly temple there rings the voice of gladness and triumph, as they sing: “Thou art worthy to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us by thy blood and hast made us kings and priests unto God for evermore.” He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. His blood cleanses from all sin.

“My soul is filled with gladness;
My heart swells up in song;
This thought dispels my sadness:
‘I to the Lord belong.’

"My load of sin has vanished;
The Lord has set me free;
My haunting fears are banished;
I trust, O Lord, in Thee.

"Temptations may beset me;
I ever safe remain;
My Lord will not forget me;
I walk his paths so plain.

"In weakness if I stumble,
He holds me by the hand;
He heeds my prayer so humble,
And in his strength I stand." Amen.

XII

JESUS OUR PRIEST FOREVER

"But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing, etc." HEBREWS 7: 24, 25.

Priesthood has been denounced as the chronic disorder of the human race, but the denunciation only discloses the dullness and passion of the scoffer who indulges it. Religion is neither an accident nor a superstition; it is a necessity which springs out of the conscience and emotions of men as surely as light gleams from the sun or waters gush from a fountain. The old Latin word, which has come directly to us, means primarily a binding back, the fastening anew of loosened bonds which hold man to his Maker. But God is a Spirit, whom no man hath seen or can see, in whose unveiled presence no man can live, and there arises a natural demand for mediation. Paganism perceives this, and appoints her princes to be her priests and ministers in divine things. The rankest idolatry accords uncommon honor to astrologers, to magicians, to soothsayers, to interpreters of oracles and omens, to all who deal in the mysteries of the unseen world, and it crowns

its ministers of religion with abundant tokens of rank and dignity. In early times the Scriptures recognized the father as priest over his own house, to deal with God on behalf of the family. Job rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings and sacrifices according to the number of his children, for Job said: "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts"; thus did Job continually. Later Noah gathered his household, the decimated remnant of a rejected race, and offered sacrifices of every clean fowl and every clean beast; and the Lord smelled the savor of rest, and the Lord said: "I will not again curse the ground for man's sake, neither will I any more smite every living thing." Abraham, journeying in obedience to the divine call, built an altar in every place where his lot was cast, and led the devotions of his family, commanding his children after him and constraining them to walk in the ways of the Lord. As the family grew into the tribe, and the tribes blended into the nation, the priesthood became a national institution. Moses built an altar in the wilderness, and called it Jehovah-nissi, God becoming an invincible banner for the people. In due time the law first written in the conscience was owned and honored in divine statutes; God said unto Aaron: "Thy sons with thee shall keep the priest's office for everything of the altar and within the

veil, and ye shall serve." This was the culmination of earthly priesthood, and it became the type of the promised Messiah, who came in due time to annul a previous commandment and to bring in a better hope. Under the law the high priest was appointed without an oath, but this man with an oath, the Lord swearing: "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek"; and they indeed were priests many in number, because they were cut down by death. "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood; wherefore he is able to save, etc."

This man conforms to the priestly type in his personal character. Under the Mosaic law the priest was distinguished for compassion, gentleness, mercy. For every high priest taken from among men and ordained for men is able also to deal gently with the ignorant and erring, since he himself is compassed with infirmity and is conscious of his own guilt. In this the priest differed from the prophet, though each had his place in the divine administration. Prophets were men raised up to meet spiritual emergencies in the life of the people. They were censors and critics, both of men and of measures; and they came with a whip for the horse, and a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool. They were the moral heroes of the age, and they dared rebuke iniquity in all its forms whether among the small or the great.

They lifted their voices above the roar of passion and the sound of revelry, commanding men to repent and turn from their evil ways; and their words of censure and warning swept over society as thunder sweeps the sky, and caused men to blanch with apprehension and tremble with fear. The priest belonged to a different type. He was not a censor and judge, neither was he sent to assail the sinner and scourge him for his sins. He did not come with the scales of justice in one hand and the sword of vengeance in the other, to weigh out guilt and inflict punishment; rather he came as a mediator and messenger of peace. He stood between sin and guilt and condemnation on the one hand and wrath and judgment and penalty on the other, and by gifts and sacrifices and supplications he became the minister of mercy and remission. His brow never knotted with indignation, and his hand never clenched in resentment; but his face beamed in benignity, and his hand extended in benediction and blessing.

Such is the man who is made our high priest forever. He came not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He took not on him the nature of angels, for surely he does not succor angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. It behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, tempted in all points as they and touched with a feeling

of their infirmities, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, and might make acceptable sacrifice for the sins of men. He went into bondage to the flesh, humbling himself and taking the form of a servant, that he might be brother to the lowliest of the race, and might touch every note in the gamut of human woe. He began at infancy, a sort of beggar's babe, born in a barn and cradled in a manger. By the hand of envy he was driven into exile in Egypt, and when permitted to return he was hidden like a culprit among the hills of Galilee. He grew up in the ranks of toil, and coming to years he wandered from place to place eyed like a fugitive from justice shadowed by officers of the law. He suffered in the flesh as one beset of bulls and compassed of dogs; and in his noblest triumphs he felt the pangs of suspicion, of treachery, of heart-breaking reproach. There is no criminal's child hiding in a goods box and trembling at the sound of approaching footsteps; no drunkard's child shivering in a garret and dreading the father's return; no gypsy's child skulking in the brush or weeping behind the tent, who knows any sorrow which he did not feel. There is no woman smitten by unspeakable disaster and dying by inches, no woman bereaved of her best beloved and sitting dumb in an agony too deep for words, no woman flung into

the discard and left in loneliness and despair, who may not find a friend in this man who was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers opened not his mouth. There is no man grappling the tempter in an agony of conflict, no man bowing his shoulders to burdens of poverty and disease or grinding his soul away in the mill of endless toil, no man sweating blood in prayer for help that never comes and at last drinking the bitter cup derided of men and forsaken of God, who may not find a similar scene in the life of this man who is made a priest for us. He knew grief in all its forms; and in measureless pity he pressed through the barriers of caste and creed and custom that he might lay his hand upon loathsome lepers or sit in sympathy with publicans and harlots, because they needed him so. His heart was with the helpless; and he went forth to gather them under his protecting care, as a hen doth gather her chickens under her wings.

This man who has the priestly character also does the priestly work. Under the Mosiac law the priest had a double service to perform. Primarily he was ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices, and thereby secure the remission of sins. It is written: "The priest shall make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord . . . This shall be

an everlasting statute unto you, to make atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins." Such was the law, and yet it was a mere shadow of things to come. The blood of bulls and goats had no redemptive qualities; it could never with the sacrifices that were offered year by year continually bring men into conditions of perfect peace, else its use would not have vanished away. The law entered, that the offense might abound; it brought a knowledge of sin, but it had no power to impart righteousness. The noblest ritual ever enacted was not enough to quell the qualms of a guilty conscience and dispel the fear of coming doom. Repeated from year to year it waned in power and in the end passed away, the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holy place was not yet disclosed. The first tabernacle was only a figure of that which was to come. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God accomplished through his Son, whom he sent in the likeness of human flesh and for sin, that men might be delivered from sin and made the righteousness of God in him. In harmony with the divine plan he came into the world, saying: "Sacrifice and offering thou dost not desire and hast no pleasure therein; lo, O God, I come with joy to do thy will." He rejected the sacrifice of beasts and birds, that he might offer a sacrifice of richer blood and nobler name.

He set aside the first, that he might establish the second, and might provide complete cleansing and perfect salvation for all that obey him. Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, he offered himself as a lamb without spot, to purge the consciences of men from dead works to serve the living God. Through him they may receive the atonement, and may share the assurance given in the word: "His blood cleanseth from all sin."

This priestly work of Christ has been the problem of the ages. There are some who hold that Christ died as a martyr to the truth, giving a worthy example of the fidelity which perseveres and presses on even into the confines of the tomb. They regard the details of his humiliation and the degree of his suffering as merely adding power to the event, and rendering it more effective in appealing to the pity of the race and working reform in the lives of men, or they consider it a disclosure of the divine love, which arouses gratitude and kindles hatred of sin. Others maintain that the death of Jesus, who was made sin for us, reveals God's hatred of sin, in that he spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him over to be smitten and slain. Still others present different views, each and every one presenting some aspect of the truth. No doubt Jesus died as a martyr, attesting with his blood the reality of his claims, and leaving an example, that men

should follow in his steps. He surely gave a rare disclosure of divine love: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." He also offered the strongest evidence of sin's enormity, as he suffered the just for the unjust, that he might bring them back to God. Deeper still there is another truth, founded in the divine decree and attested in the human conscience, demanding that sin be punished and that every transgression and disobedience receive a just recompense of reward. God must be just in justifying the ungodly, as well as in condemning the reprobate or in acquitting the guiltless. He must also magnify the law and make it honorable, while he annuls its penalties for those who accept his grace. Whatever theories be advanced, the truth remains: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every man to his own way, and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all."

This man, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, has yet another office to perform. When the high priest of old had offered up the appointed sacrifices first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people, he took the blood of atonement and passed within the veil to meet the Lord at the mercy seat, there to make inter-

cession for the transgressors. He stood daily ministering and offering many times the same sacrifices, and he entered in repeating many times the same prayers; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, entered in and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own precious blood; not into the holy place made with hands, the figure of the true, but into heaven itself, he passed from the sight of men gazing after him into the sky, that he might appear in the presence of God to plead for his own. He knows the mind of the Father, and he makes intercession according to the will of God. He is an advocate with the Father, and is both a propitiation and a plea. He pleads the covenant of grace, the finished redemption, the fulfilled law, the despoiled grave, the glory of the divine name, the justice of the divine procedure. Not after the order of Aaron with its ceaseless succession, but after the power of an endless life he abides a priest forever to make intercession for those who come unto God by him.

Wherefore! Hear ye this divine logic, which is as sure as the throne of God. Hear, and drop your doubts, and cast your fears away. Wherefore, he is able also to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God by him; neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name,

nor is there need of any other. He has all the forms of power, and he has them to the utmost measure. His physical power metes out the heavens as a span, and holds the countless worlds in their orbits, and weighs the hills in a balance. His moral power banishes unclean spirits from heaven and flings them into chains reserved for the judgment of the last day. Above all principality and might and dominion, his name above every name known to man, he sits on the throne, holding in subjection all the forces of the universe and having authority over all. Oh, power to bind the dragon, that old serpent who is called the devil and Satan, and to cast him into the abyss of hell; power to pluck up by the roots the foul tree of death, whose noisome shadow has darkened the globe and ditched the earth with graves; power to transmute the grief and groan of nature, travailing in pain and waiting for the promised redemption, into a song of rapture that shall ring round the disenthralled earth and announce all things made new; power to sound the knell of time, and silently open the gates of vast eternity, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest! The sea that laves all lands is no fit emblem of his fullness, for every drop removed leaves less to swell the tides; but he is the same yesterday, to-day, forever, having no variableness nor shadow of turning, and is

the fullness of the godhead bodily. The sun shining in strength is no sufficient symbol of his glory, for the day cometh when the sun shall be darkened before the light of the Lamb. In the supremacy of his power he is able to save you and me and every weary soul that seeks his face; for it has come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved!

The highest schemes that human wisdom can devise and human energy execute are marred by imperfection. Under the best forms of government injustice and oppression abide, guilt goes unsmitten of the scourge and cruel wrongs cry out in vain for redress. Science ransacks the laboratory of nature in search of remedies for physical ills, and yet disease and pain continue their remorseless course and at last conquer every living thing. Sociology utters her creed, education pursues her noble work, charity extends her bountiful hand; but poverty and ignorance and multiplied miseries remain. The whole realm of human endeavor abounds in signs of failure; only Jesus never fails, and is never discouraged. He is able to save to the utmost of danger and daring and difficulty. He cares for us, yearns over us, stoops in pity and extends the scepter of pardon and peace. O throne of iron, from which through ages past have been flung thunders of indignation and wrath to affright the guilty

race, avaunt, and quit my sight! O throne of ebony, draped in clouds and darkness and emitting smoke and mists and mystery to awe the souls of men, depart hence! O throne of crystal, shimmering in brightness and casting a cold and chilling light, vanish and give thou place! O throne of mediatorial grace, thou seat of power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing, abide thou forever! O thou that sittest thereon, I yield myself to thee! Thou art my Lord, and thou my Saviour evermore! Amen.

THE END

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